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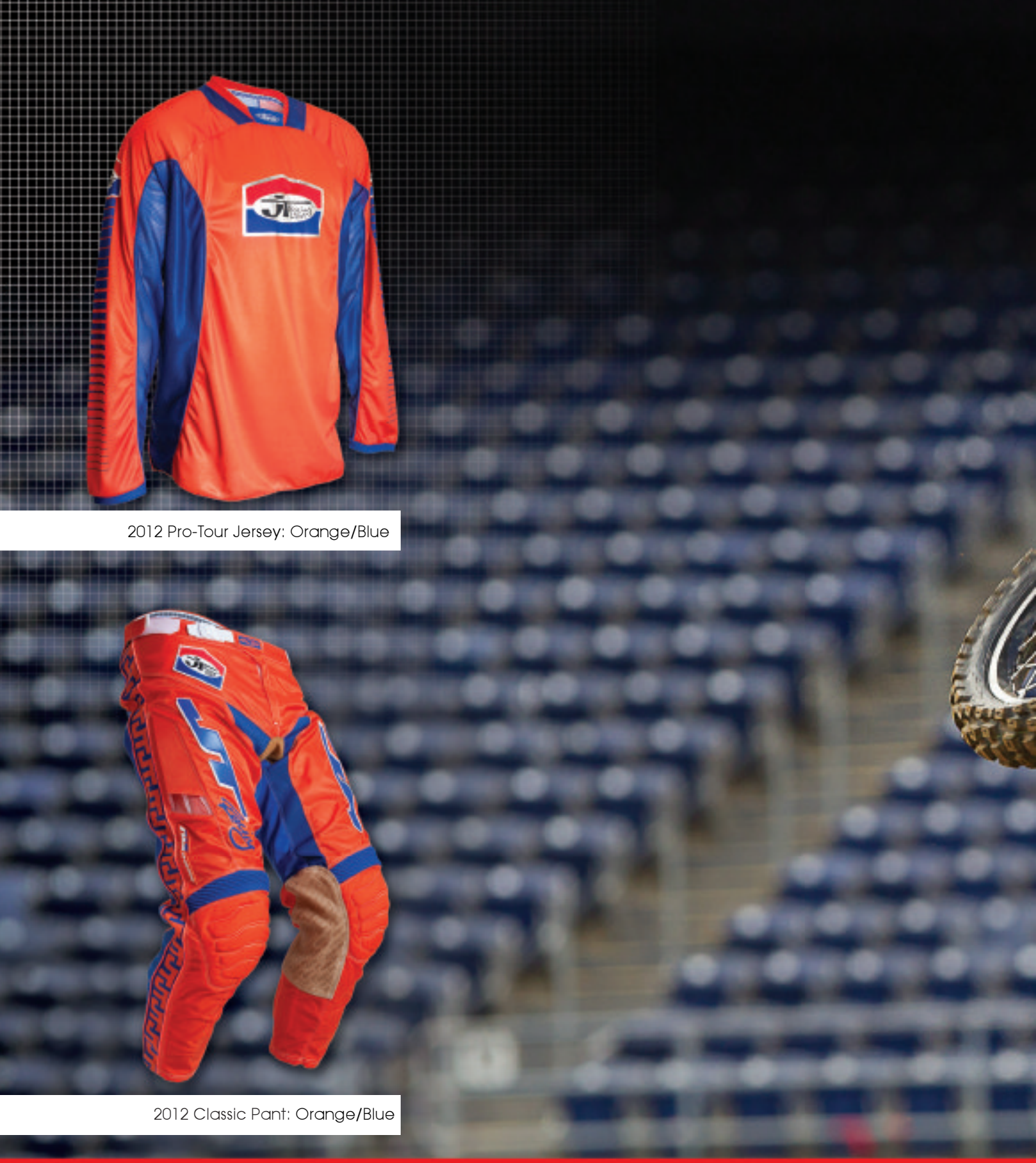
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COVER: *Evgeny Bobryshev kicks up a sandstorm at a pre-season team Honda photoshoot © Sarah Gutierrez*

CONTENTS: *STR KTM's Matiss Karro can't seem to keep his 350 off the podium so far this year © Sutty*



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COMMENT

Well here we go again! By the time this 'ere issue of your favourite mag (whose title doesn't rhyme with 'jazzle', 'siesta' or 'pak choi') hits the newsstands we'll be two rounds into the Maxxis British championship series and three days shy of the first GP of the year tearing down the sandy start straight at Valkenswaard. The clocks have gone forward, throttles are being twisted back and we've even been basking in a week of sun up in a normally miserable Morecambe in March. Good times!

And it was good times at the opening Maxxis round at our old mate Martin Cravendale's fantastically fabulous FatCat Motoparc n'all. The crowd was big, the sun was shining and the racing was cracking which all ensured that the ACU's British championship got off to a flying start. Of course it could have pee'd down all day and the spectators could have stayed at home but the powers-that-be at Rugby would still have done themselves a big favour by opening their series up at the Doncaster venue.

Why? One word – infrastructure. For the past couple of years the season-opener has been at Little Silver and while the Devon track does stand up to a lot of water – and it's needed to – the spectator parking certainly doesn't. Who, apart from the most diehard of fans, would want to file slowly up a singletrack lane into a muddy carpark in a stubblefield on the side of a bloody steep hill? We need to make the sport attractive to the masses so somewhere like FatCat with its great access roads and flat, hard-standing carpark – plus superb all-weather track – perfectly fits the bill for an opening round in March. It's a total no-brainer.

To keep you all up to speed with the new GP season, this month we're carrying a big world championship preview including a mini-interview with Tommy Searle, our best bet for a world title since Jamie Dobb did the business 11 years ago. And we also take a long look at the upcoming Red Bull Pro Nationals as Events 22 unleash an even bigger and better series that over the next five months will criss-cross the country.

At this point I guess I should put my hand up and declare a vested interest in the RBPNs as in a few months time I'm going to be leaving DBR to work full-time for Events 22, among other things helping to increase the mainstream media buzz surrounding the series and promoting the sport to a much wider audience. It's something I feel very passionate about and coupled with the winter arenacross series makes for very exciting times ahead.

By the time I leave I'll have overseen a whopping 138 monthly bundles of fun which is a record for a DBR Editor and makes me feel the time really is right to move on. But I'm not going just yet – I've still got the June and July issues to steer – and rest assured you're all going to be invited to the leaving party which is planned for a yacht in Monaco sometime in June but will more likely take place in an abandoned fishing boat on Morecambe foreshore…

Sean

PS The whole office tuned in to online radio station **www.bikerfm.co.uk** the other night to see how many times Jake Nicholls would swear live on air and the answer was loads! The dirty little potty mouth…



Zach's back in the US healing up after a huge practice crash ended his 2012 GP ambitions

© yamaha-racing.com

NEWSHOUND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS…

It's hard to believe that it's almost three years since Tonymoto was last used as a motocross track after the company that operated it – Three Maids Motocross Ltd – had their temporary permission to use the site end and full planning consent to continue refused due to 'dust and noise pollution'.

Since then company owner Tony Childs has been battling hard with Winchester council to get the decision turned around and after countless appeals, hearings and whatnot has finally come out on top. While that's obviously awesome news for all us riders, it's definitely *grrrrrreat* news for Tony who gets the added bonus of winning back part of his legal costs after the council were unable to offer evidence as to why they turned down the planning application in the first place.

Obviously, the decision has upset some of the locals who simply don't want a motocross track on their doorstep – even though no there's no actual proof that it's in any way detrimental to them – and they've been voicing their opinions on several of the local news websites. While some of the comments are quite reasonable there's the odd one that's just so ignorant you can't help but laugh – like this one… 'What a dirty, horrible noisy sport – why on earth would anyone see fit to tear up our beautiful countryside with these god awful machines? Motorbikes should be banned full stop – they are death traps (apart from the ones used to carry blood in emergencies)!'. Awesome. No official opening date has been released just yet but keep an eye on **www.dirtbikerider.com** and we'll let you know!

On the opposite end of the smile-o-meter sits Marc de Reuver whose race season started with a double dose of disappointment as he failed to crack the top 10 at the opening round of the Maxxis and was also briefly left 100 bones out of pocket when the organisers of the Hawkstone International inadvertently included five forged 20s in his packet of prize money. Wanting to rectify the Salop club's mistake (which to be fair they did themselves as soon as the Sextons were discovered at Marc's local Clogbank) and cheer up our favourite chicken-legged Dutchman we had a quick whip-round at DBR Towers and managed to raise enough monies to buy Marc a packet of tissues for him to sob into – y'know, the ones that are printed to look like £10 notes! Hilarious! Calimero was most pleased to receive our gift although he did say he'd much prefer a framed DBR cover like we'd given our last two cover stars – Zach Osborne and Matiss Karro – earlier that very same day. Your time might



Matty Moffat kicks ass at FatCat as the Scott Amateur Nationals get a sandy start to the season

come Marc, your time might come…

On the subject of Zachary O it looks like his epic pre-season training and practice schedule might have all been for nowt as a massive crash during a training moto at FatCat Motoparc has left our favourite West Virginian with a fudged up collarbone and wrist. Eye-witness reports claim Zach was scrubbing the sh*t out of a tabletop when an engine problem turned his Monster Energy Yamaha into nothing more than a fast-moving 100kg paperweight – the resulting crash was horrible. Osborne headed back to America for surgery and will definitely miss the Valkenswaard GP – get well soon Zach and let us know if those rumours about you signing for GEICO Honda next year are true or not! Monster Energy Yamaha team boss Steve Dixon confirmed Zach will be heading back to America in 2013 but wouldn't say with who.

With a rare weekend off to do WTF I liked I decided that I liked to go and hit up a pair of race meetings – the opening round of the Scott Amateur Nationals and the one and only round of this year's AMCA Superclass champs. The Scott Amateur Nationals are basically Darren Hudson's twostrokevetsandladies series rebranded and relaunched so long before I arrived at FatCat I knew I was in for a cracking day of racing. And I was right, the action came thick and fast all day with Matt Moffat (250 two-stroke and MX1), Tom Davies (125 two-stroke), Adam Darbyshire (MX2), flyin' Ryan Griffiths (Vets), Michael Graham (Juniors) and Stacey Fisher (Ladies) taking the overalls for the weekend.

The series now heads to Mepal next for round two on April 22 before hitting up Hawkstone, Brampton, Condover, Farleigh Castle, Finningley and Long Lane over the remainder of the year. If you enjoy good, hard racing in a laidback and stress-free environment then go check 'em out. Log on to **www.scottnationals.co.uk** for entry info and whatnot.

The AMCA Superclass championships used to be a huge deal and back in the late '70s was even televised on ITV's World of Sport – if anyone's got a copy of that Brownhills meeting they could burn to a DVD and send to DBR Towers then I'd love to see it again. Anyhoo, this year's edition of the Superclass championship is much lower key although the quality of the racing at the front of the strangely small field is still cracking as defending champ Lee Dunham, Clinton Barrs, Richard Cannings and Lee Payne battle it out over three races at Whalley Nab. Local lad Payne takes the overall and this year's Superclass title with it by running 1-1-2 on the day while Dunham and Matthew Williamson round out the podium. All in all it's a pretty good meeting and only cost three quid to get in. By my reckoning that makes it much better value than the £74,825.46 Big Daddy meal and BBQ Cheesy Roller I picked up from KFC on my way home – luckily it was on the regimental credit card.

Something that's equally as tasty, packs way fewer calories and is a damn sight cheaper than that fowl feast is this UFO makeover kit for Yamaha two-strokes that brings the 2012 YZ range kicking and screaming out of the noughties and bang up to date – just like the triple tuning-fork branded four-poppers. The kits are available now from MD Racing for a princely sum – finger lickin' bargain I say!

In all honesty I fully expect to be seeing some of those bad boys at the opening round of the Fuchs-Silkolene two-stroke series which'll be held at Landrake on April 28/29 as the Red Bull Pro Nationals kicks off at the cream of Cornish MX tracks. Other hot race dates for your diaries include the third round of the Maxxis British champs at Lyng on May 6 followed one week later by some British Masters action at Whitby!



Lee Payne cleans up at the AMCA Superclass event

"Daddy, what's he got on his head?" Lawless Jnr cuts to the chase with Matiss



"Moshtly I'll be using themsh to wipesh my arsh..."



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

ETNIES ROCKSTAR SWAG UP FOR GRABS

To celebrate the launch of the spring 2012 Etnies Rockstar collection we've snagged a whole bag o'swag to give away in a great new comp! Yessiree, one lucky reader will win the bag o'swag we've snagged which contains – wait for it, wait for it – a pair of Rockstar Fader 1.5s, some Rockstar Fader V Fusions, a Comp Stripe zip fleece, a Burst tee and a Burst hat all washed down with a year's supply of Rockstar energy drink!

Now is that snagged bag o'swag good enough to make your tail wag or what? No need to answer that one – it's a rhetorical question – but in order to be in with a chance of winning we do require the correct answer to another question which is…

Which Etnies Rockstar supported FMX star was raised in Anza, California?

Is it: ***A: Beatrix Potter***
B: Todd Potter
C: Harry Potter
D: Josiah Wedgwood

Think you know the answer? Okay, scan your smartphone over the **QR code** or point your PC towards **www.dirtbikerider.com** where you need to follow the competitions link to dirtZone, fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The comp closes on **May 10** with the winner the first correct entry drawn totally at random after this date. For the full range of Etnies Rockstar stuff check out **www.freestylextreme.com**

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BT GOES TWO TWO

BEN'S BACK IN THE BIG TIME

Former MX2 world and AMA SX Lites champ Ben Townley is returning to America to take up the vacant ride on Chad Reed's Two Two Motorsports team. The 27-year-old Kiwi was due to race the full Aussie outdoor season alongside Brits Billy MacKenzie and Brad Anderson but changed his plans when he got the call from Reed – although it wasn't an easy decision.

"On one side I had an amazing opportunity with what Chad has presented," explains BT, "but on the other hand my Australian team and I have spent a lot of time getting ready for the championship Down Under.

"Right now I'll race the first Australian MX National round – there is the possibility of some more before the season starts – but we'll make decisions about that closer to the time. For me it is important to keep some real race simulation going and being behind startgates is the best way to do it."

The ride was vacated by Reed after he crashed out of the AMA Supercross season at round seven in Dallas, sustaining season-ending injuries including a torn left ACL, fractured left tib and fib, broken ribs and a broken C6 vertebra.

After winning his world title and enjoying Stateside success BT, who's just wrapped up the NZ motocross title, returned to GPs last year but quit after four rounds as he battled to overcome a serious pre-season concussion. Now fully recovered he's relishing the opportunity to return Stateside.

"I'll be based in Florida which is nice for my family as we have lived there in the past. Chad has a really good practice facility and I'll be able to take advantage of that which will be good for me. I'll be riding as a complete TwoTwo Motorsports rider, as if Chad was out there but with the 101 on my bike though! All of my personal sponsors have been great about this opportunity and I'm very thankful to them for their blessing to go ahead with it.

"I'm realistic that it's been a while since I've raced at the highest level. In saying that, physically and mentally I'm in great shape. I want to run up front but mostly I want to use this opportunity to work with some great people on a very good bike to have a good complete season and get myself back to where I want to be."



In between races BT likes to sail the seven seas plundering booty from passing galleons



THE REVEREND

HARD KNOCKS!

JAKE'S PUTTING IN THE LAPS AT THE TOUGHEST SAND TRACKS ON THE PLANET AND TAKING HIS SHARE OF BUMPS AND BRUISES AS HE PREPARES FOR THE OPENING GP OF THE YEAR...

Words by **Jake Nicholls** Photo by **Sutty**

It's been pretty busy for me recently as I have raced every weekend since Valence on February 18 but it's been a lot of fun as the winter dragged and I was yearning to get racing again. I'm not going to lie though – it's been a tough month due to a few different things but looking back I think they have all done me a favour.

As I said last month I didn't feel very good on the bike at Hawkstone – I felt as rusty as hell which I just put down to it being the second race of the year for me. The following week leading up to the first Dutch championship round in Oss I went to the doctors with Werner Dewit who is the team rider coach for a blood test.

That weekend I had a decent outing and finished third in the first race after coming through from about 10th. Second race I was pushing hard and crashed on the second lap. It was p*ssing with rain which made my fight through the pack even tougher but I got back to 10th at the flag. I didn't feel too bad though and certainly didn't feel very tired.

But the blood results came back not so good so since then I've been getting injections each week and taking some medication which has meant my training has had to calm down a little bit. For me that is one of the toughest things about it all as I hate slowing down with my training. All the time I want to work harder and push more and more and to have to slow it all right down and rest loads has been hard to take. I also got quite sick that week as well so I couldn't ride at all ahead of the next round in Halle.

That was a very tough track – sand like Lierop but a bit slower and with big jumps too. I felt very rusty and my breathing was terrible after having a chest infection that week. I still went 4-4 on the day for fourth overall which was a decent day considering.

My illness finally went the following week and I was allowed to ride once mid-week which felt bloody good again. Then we were off to a track called Heerde for the third round. It rained on and off most of the day and the track was really deep black sand and fast in places, then very slow in others. It was one of the roughest tracks I've raced on as there was no rest at all.

I qualified well but got a bad start in race one so I pushed like hell early on and was going fast but had a small crash – then two laps later I jumped off the side of a tabletop and ate sh*t quite badly. I landed on my face but got straight up pretty dazed. My goggles were smashed so I threw them to a guy on the side of the track and picked up what was left of the bike and got back on it. I pushed through from 20th back to 12th at the flag but with a headache and about two tons of dirt in my eyes.

The guy who I threw my goggles to was there to give them to me when I pulled off the track which made me a little less angry and I thanked him and stomped back to the truck. I'd split my eyebrow open – I went to the medical tent and the doctor said I couldn't race the second race and that I had to go to hospital for stitches. I was over it but luckily Joel the truck driver borrowed a car and raced Blu and I to a hospital in Zwolle where they stitched me up pretty quick and we got back in time for the second race. I had to show the doc a note that the hospital had written saying I was fine as I told the hospital a rock had been flung up and hit me otherwise they would never have let me race.

I was a bit confused with it all in my head as next minute I was sat on a startline with a plaster pushing on my eyelid which was annoying but nevertheless I pulled a huge holeshot and led for a lap or two and eventually finished fourth. My eye was fine after it all though and healed up fast the next week.

I've been working real hard with Werner who was a really good rider in his time – especially in the sand which is my weakness – and I am feeling better each week in it thanks to him and the hard work I'm putting in. I could ride two days that following week which was good and we went one day to a hardpack track which was so much fun after having not ridden it for a while. I was loving it to be honest.

The next day we were back at it in Lommel – man I've spun some laps round there already this year! Then it was off to Mill at the weekend which was like a GP – the only people missing were Tommy, Zach and Max. I holeshotted the first race and rode good for the first few laps but then got terrible armpump and rode around in fourth. Second race I crashed first corner while in about fourth – I was gutted but got up last and rode my best all the way to 10th which was a good effort as the track was really rough.

It was interesting to see Tonus come there and get smoked as he has won everything so far. I think it shows the quality of the field and especially the quality of sand riding there. It's a tough series – each weekend the second race is like Lierop at the end of a GP and all the tracks are totally new to me.

I'm looking forward to Valkenswaard as it's five miles from my house here in Belgium and I'm working hard for the GP season. Mum and dad have come over to a couple of Dutch rounds too which has been nice and they have enjoyed it – it was good to see them too as I haven't been home since early February. I'm also looking forward to seeing plenty of you at Valkenswaard cheering on all the Brits – it's not one to miss guys...




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TMX TASTIC!

DBR'S SISTER GETS SEXY...

Here at DBR we're not adverse to hooking a brother up or, when it comes to it, helping a sister out – and in this case the sibling in question is our sister publication Trials and Motocross News.

TMX is 35 years old this year and in advance of the huge birthday celebrations Editor JD (sadly that's John Dickinson, not Jack Daniels) is no doubt planning the hard-working team in the office below us are polishing up an all-new look for the world's leading off-road weekly newspaper.

Relaunched today (April 6), TMX has a fresh masthead and has dropped the 'News' bit from the title – which is kinda ironic seeing as it's going to be packed with the stuff along with star columnists, expert analysis and a plethora of pics and reports from events all over the world.

Newly signed-up to the team, World Youth Trials Champ Jack Sheppard will share column space with extreme enduro hotshot Jonny Walker and Jake Nicholls' wrench Olly Stone will also be keeping readers up to date with his greasy goings on in his Diary of a GP Mechanic. And as there's no 'I' in team we'll be leasing out Stephen Sword to give TMX readers a monthly look into the life of a top-flight MX rider.

To ensure the relaunch goes with a bang the Good Friday issue also comes with a massive, glossy, pull-out panoramic GP Guide featuring Alex Snotkinson's world championship preview on one side and a huge Jake Nicholls poster on the other. And to top it off there's an exclusive comp to win genuine Eli Tomac Alias race kit.

So buy it – or we'll send The Bear round...





CROCKSTAR

CRAICING ON!

STUDYING, TRAINING, RACING, DOING HIS SUMS – GORDY'S PUTTING IT ABOUT THIS MONTH AND LOVING EVERY MINUTE OF IT...

Words by **Gordon Crockard** Photo by **Sutty**

So, here's the craic with the Crock! I'm now a qualified St John's First Aider. I am leading the Irish Motocross Championship. I have passed the first stage of my motorcycle road bike test. I have enrolled as a student and I am four weeks into my 20-week City and Guilds teaching course in the Belfast Met College.

On top of all that I have started my self-regulated physical performance development programme incorporating cycling, running, XC MTB, massage, yoga, motocross, trials and BMX.

I also attended a fund-raising event at Eddie Irvine Sports in Bangor for Sport Relief. It was a three-hour indoor kart race with a team of six drivers. Our team won by a staggering five laps. The drivers on our team were Eddie Irvine (the former Formula 1 driver for Ferrari), Jeremy McWilliams (the former Moto GP rider), Colin Turkington (the World Touring Car driver), Josh Brookes (the former WSB rider and current BSB rider), Jann Mardenborough (the 2011 GT Academy winner) and my bad self of course!

It was a mega night actually and I made sure that every driver in the race became aware of the racing attitude and method a motocross rider takes when dealing with passing manoeuvres. Jeremy was team captain and had to suffer verbal attacks about me from other drivers who described my track conduct in a manner and selection of words that I wouldn't like for my mother to ever hear. A highlight for me was when I ended up on two wheels and rail sliding the belly pan of the kart along the track dividing barriers. I did consider the consequences of putting the kart on her roof at that point but that only lasted a millisecond – I'd a race to get on with winning after all.

Betty Blacks kindly put on the post race VIP afterparty so we went and celebrated but not too hard as I had to get up at 6am and get myself to Downpatrick for the first round of the Irish championship.

The track was in fantastic order, the sun was blazing, a massive entry of riders showed up, the Killinchy club ran the event superbly and in general I enjoyed the atmosphere and I'm glad I went. My results were okay with 1-2-1 but the race I finished second in was disappointing as I was the fastest dude on the track but paid the price for screwing up the start and getting all tangled up with the guys around me. I made two passes for the lead on the last lap but failed to make either of them stick. It was close!

I looked at doing round two of the Maxxis and then staying in England and doing the following weekend's race at Culham which would be round two of the British Masters series. I had wildcard entries in place and I looked at the financial implications of doing these two events. Here's a breakdown of the costs – ferry £210, diesel £300 minimum, Maxxis entry £120, Masters entry £140, tyres £160. Total £985! So with that figure guaranteed to be spent and no guarantee of prize money I didn't have to think too much about deciding to go or not once I split logic from emotion.

Three fourth place finishes at a Maxxis would return me £750 and two fourth places at a Masters would return me £300. That's a possible £1250 of a return on the guaranteed £960 of costs. That's £105 profit. Extra costs of bike fuel and bike bits can be added to make my plea of poverty even greater and amplify the volume of my violin.

I'm not committed to any championships this year. I'm freelance and will select where I want to go and race based on several factors including my fondness of the track, the cost versus profit calculation, my personal ambition and my desire to put right the damage of 2011. But I want to race as I do love my Kawasaki – it's standard except for heavier fork and shock springs and I ride it and it gives me inspiration to go faster and faster. For me that is MX – the challenge of finding out how fast you can go.

I have the court hearing on April 30 regarding my practice track that has been closed due to one neighbour complaining. That neighbour moved in seven years ago and complained to the council immediately. I have used that field as a practice track for 26 years, I have full planning, I have letters from all of the other surrounding neighbours to support me and state that the noise doesn't bother them. The complainant's house is 320 metres from the track, four other neighbours who don't complain and do support me live 97 metres, 126 metres, 174 metres and 212 metres away.

I could go on about other factors to do with the case that heavily strengthen my side of the argument but I won't as I already reckon you're tired of my relentless yapping! Good luck in your races and track time and remember – when in doubt FLAT OUT!



WIN! WIN! WIN!

WE'VE GOT GRIPS UP FOR GRABS!

Grips up for grabs? Yes! Grips up for grabs! And not just any old grips up for grabs – the grips up for grabs we've got are spankingly-good Domino grips which would knock the spots off any other grips up for grabs we've got. If we had any more grips up for grabs. Which we don't. Anyways…

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"An Apex sticker? You must know Geoff Stephen..."

SWORDY

TESTING TIMES!

IT'S NOT ALL SUPER-SMOOTH FOR SWORDY AT THE MOMENT BUT HE'S CONFIDENT THINGS ARE SOON GOING TO CLICK INTO PLACE…

Words by **Stephen Sword** Photo by **Sutty**

With the warm-up races out the way it was time for the first British at FatCat. The week leading up to it I had a test with Ohlins. Terje, an old friend of mine from my GP days, came over from Sweden to help get things dialled in.

The team came over a few days early along with my team-mate Stuey Edmonds and Terje did a good job in helping me get a more comfortable setting. He's a cool guy to get along with and we've also got a test booked in for next month on some hardpack tracks as all the races so far have been sand ones.

After our day's testing we all headed out for some dinner that night along with Terje who decided to stay for a bit and leave for the airport after the traffic had died down. I stayed in Doncaster that night as there was no point in going home to come back up again to Fatcat on the Saturday.

We got to the track around mid-morning which for me is probably a first as I'm never there that early. When I was roped in to help with the awning I remembered why I never arrived early on a Saturday! But the track looked in awesome condition and the weather was good too.

My goal for the day was to finish top six. Most people can see that I am not on great form at the moment – a few little bits need to click and then I will be feeling good. To find myself fastest in the morning qualifying was a little bit of a surprise and even more so for the team I think. Super Pole I ended up fourth but was still happy with that.

To sum the whole day up I was satisfied but also disappointed. My starts in all three races were very good, my speed was okay at times but I was race rusty which is understandable seeing as my last British championship race before that was Foxhill in July. I ended up seventh overall with 43 points – good points on the board and something to build on.

The following week I wanted to race somewhere to get more race time. My dad said to me there was a meeting at Brampton so I got an entry and headed up on the Saturday afternoon. Jodie and Starlia stayed at home but I took Ayrton up with me. Paul my mechanic wasn't coming over so I just prepped the practice bike up for the day. I had to get a couple of tyres fitted on the Saturday – my dad was at Clark Davidson's that afternoon so I popped in to get them done. Clark got me all sorted for Sunday and we parked together under the same ez-up he had.

It was a good fun day and the track was in great shape. I had three wins so I was pleased with that – a win is a win no matter where you are and it does the confidence good too. The club looked after me very well and I saw a lot of old friends that I used to race with when I first started racing at Brampton. Ayrton had a great day too – my family was looking after him while I was racing, the rest of the time he just played in the sand next to the van. I caught him trying to put sand in the silencer at one point. He got told off for that and was not happy.

I was planning on driving home that night but our last race didn't finish until gone 6pm so Ayrton and I stayed up that night and left in the morning. It's a good job we stayed as I was flat-out asleep by 9pm.

The following week there was no race so I had a family weekend. The weather has been so nice lately I put the pool up in the garden for the kids (and me). The BBQ has been on as well – it's been great.

I flew over to Ireland for a couple of days riding before Canada Heights. Paul picked me up from the airport and I stayed with Adam for a couple of nights. The tracks were good practice for Canada Heights and I was feeling more at one with the bike. Adam and I did a wee bit of cycling one evening as the weather was great.

It's been a good month and good preparation for the upcoming races. I'm looking forward to the next British and for the Red Bull Pro Nationals to start.

See you at the races…



Antoine Meo kicks off his assault on the E1 crown with a double win

©Edmunds J. KTM Images

Knighter eats a lot of dust on the opening day but keeps the KTM pinned

©Edmunds J. KTM Images

SERIES STANDINGS

ENDURO 1

1	Antoine Meo **KTM**	40
2	Rodrig Thain **Honda**	32
3	Marc Bourgeois **Yamaha**	25
4	Simone Albergoni **Honda**	23
5	Jeremy Joly **Yamaha**	21

ENDURO 2

1	Ivan Cervantes **Gas Gas**	34
2	Juha Salminen **Husqvarna**	31
3	Pela Renet **Husaberg**	30
4	Cristobal Guerrero **KTM**	26
5	Oscar Balletti **Beta**	25

ENDURO 3

1	Christophe Nambotin **KTM**	40
2	Aigar Leok **TM**	32
3	David Knight **KTM**	29
4	Oriol Mena **Husaberg**	26
5	Joakim Ljunggren **Husaberg**	23

ENDURO JUNIOR

1	Mathias Bellino **Husaberg**	40
2	Danny McCanney **Gas Gas**	32
3	Victor Guerrero **KTM**	26
4	Alexandre Queyreyre **Yamaha**	25
5	Kevin Benavides **KTM**	24
12	Alex Rockwell **Husaberg**	9

CHILE DOGS!

MIXED FORTUNES FOR DK AND THE BRIT PACK AS THE EWC KICKS OFF IN SOUTH AMERICA

Words: **Future 7 Media**

Britain's hopes of securing Enduro World Championship success in 2012 kick off with mixed results at the series opener, the GP of Chile. Arriving at the host city of Talca, KTM's David Knight knows a strong start to the season is essential in turning his recent EWC fortunes around.

Now fully healed after last season's double hip operations, Knight's 4-2 scorecard in the Enduro 3 class is a solid but not ideal start to his international campaign. Spending most of his weekend blinded by the dust of slower riders, Knight is thankful to leave this year's EWC opener unscathed.

"Starting near the back of the E3 class I spent most of day one blinded by slower riders' dust – I did the best I could to finish fourth," says David. "Day two was better. We had more time to allow the dust to settle and finishing second was a good end to a tough GP."

Making his EWC debut in Chile, Gas Gas' Danny McCanney wastes little time settling into the event. Third fastest in the Enduro Junior class during the Friday evening Super Test, Danny shows he means business. Setting times equal to those more used to the incredibly dry and dusty terrain, McCanney finishes day one an impressive second in class. Determined to prove his result is no fluke, the Manx youngster backs it up with another strong ride by finishing third on day two.

"It's gone better than I imagined," confirms Danny fresh from his podium celebrations. "I hoped I'd be competitive but I wasn't sure if I'd be quick enough in these dusty conditions – it's not really something we get too often back on the Island. I'm chuffed with getting on the podium so soon and hopefully I can keep these results coming my way."

Getting the short end of the stick throughout most of the weekend, Husaberg's Alex Rockwell had hoped to join McCanney on the podium in Chile. Finishing second in the Super Test he proves his speed but by spending most of his weekend battling through the dust and chaos caused by slower riders, Rockwell's 13th and 10th place results aren't a true reflection on his potential.

By mid-afternoon on day one, Husaberg's EWC rookie Jamie McCanney is looking all but assured of victory in the Youth Cup. With just the final extreme test left a stray dog suddenly sideswipes the younger of the two McCanney brothers, sending him crashing to the ground. Unable to take avoiding action, he's sent cartwheeling down the track, breaking his wrist and collarbone in the process. Down and out, McCanney can do nothing but watch his chances of victory pass him by.

With the Brits having their share of mixed fortunes in Chile, the French get themselves off to a flying start. KTM's new golden boy Antoine Meo puts in a dominant ride to the win both days in Enduro 1. With Meo out front, it's his fellow Frenchmen Rodrig Thain (Honda) and Marc Bourgeois (Yamaha) that join him on the podium on day one. On day two the order changes as Simone Albergoni (Honda) finishes second pushing Thain back into third.

Spoiling the French party, Finland's Juha Salminen (Husqvarna) sets the pace on day one to win Enduro 2 ahead of Ivan Cervantes (Gas Gas) and Beta's Oscar Balletti. The French order is quickly restored on day two when Husaberg's Pela Renet puts in a determined ride to secure victory. Again Cervantes proves the new Gas Gas 450F is up to speed with another solid second place while Alex Salvini (Husqvarna) bumps his way up into third.

Frenchman Christophe Nambotin (KTM) takes a comfortable Enduro 3 win on both days in Chile. TM Racing's Aigar Leok secures his first EWC podium with second on day one and Oriol Mena (Husaberg) is third. Knight improves on day two to finish in second while Leok continues to impress with third place.



Taddy's the daddy on day one

SPRINT STARS!

TADDY TOPS BSEC ELITE

Words: **Future 7 Media**

KTM's Taddy Blazusiak returns to the UK for more Husqvarna British Sprint Enduro Championship action at rounds three and four and quickly establishes himself at the top of the Elite class standings.

Managing to open up a healthy 40-second winning margin on Saturday, thoughts of a double race victory are short-lived as Husqvarna's US import Ricky Dietrich blasts his way to the win at round four.

"I dropped the ball yesterday," confirms Ricky on Sunday evening. "I was too slow to get going and it cost me a shot at the overall win. But today I had my race face on from the word go. It's a relief to finally win again – I needed it."

Blazusiak arrives in Llangrove focused on improving on his second place finish at round one. Setting the fastest time in the first run he gets off on the right footing, holding a seven-second advantage over Tom Church. After his third place finish at the series opener, KTM-mounted Church again proves to be a dab hand in the woods. Initially he finds himself sitting second in Elite from Electraction TM's blue-eyed boy Jordan Rose. However a couple of mistakes rob Church of a podium finish.

With Blazusiak, Rose and Dietrich rounding out the top three, TC grabs fourth from Daryl Bolter.

For a rider still learning the ins and outs of sprint racing, Dietrich's in no mood to hang about on Sunday morning. Trailing Blazusiak by one second at the end of the opening run it's clear he's learnt from his previous day's mistake. Overhauling the KTM rider in the following test, Dietrich is looking strong out front and he stretches out a lead he never loses.

Hitting the dirt within yards of both the start and finish of the first test, Church has a morning to forget. But as he begins to learn his way around the Llangrove circuit he improves with each lap and finishes third to beat Rose and Bolter into fourth and fifth.

"I think I'm getting the hang of this woods racing though I did kiss the dirt this morning," laughs TC. "In this company third is a mega result for me. I think I can get faster at these – I just need a bit more experience."

SERIES STANDINGS

ELITE

1	*Taddy Blazusiak **KTM***	*54*
2	*Tom Church **KTM***	*50*
3	*Jordan Rose **TM***	*46*
4	*Ricky Dietrich **Husqvarna***	*43*
5=	*Daryl Bolter **KTM***	*40*
5=	*Simon Wakely **Husaberg***	*40*
5=	*Jamie Lewis **Husqvarna***	*40*



MAX POWER

CRASH LANDING!

MAX LANDS IN EUROPE AND CRASHES SO HARD AT MANTOVA HE THINKS HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS AT GLEN HELEN…

Words by **Max Anstie** Photo by **Steve Cox**

So I landed heavily in Europe and by that I mean I hit the deck face first and couldn't remember a week of my life!

But let's rewind just a little to before I left the US. The time was coming closer that I would have to board a plane to Italy and say goodbye to all the things I know and love such as my family, friends, track, house, gym (don't make my gym dirty when I'm gone) dogs, cat and goat (which I haven't met yet).

Yeah, so for the next six months I'm going to be based in Milan throughout the week and trying to take over the world on the weekends. On my last day in the US we headed to Pole Position where my English buddies that are still in the States had a shot at beating me one last time on the track – but this time in karts. Unfortunately for them and the rest of the world I dominated and now I'm planning on going on that same streak this season. And that's all I can write about from before I left because frankly I don't remember anything else.

So I landed in Italy, got off the plane, drove to Mantova, got my gear on and rode. I had to test some stuff and I ended up crashing my brains out and thinking I crashed in Glen Helen almost a week before. So my first night in Italy I spent in a hospital but the next day I was released with nothing but a stiff neck. I have never crashed like that and knocked myself out. Such a weird feeling. I've heard loads of stories from when my dad used to hit trees flat-out and knock himself silly. So now I have my own.

I then spent the next few days acclimatising myself and getting my set-up sorted out. I was back riding again in a few days and was surprised at how good I felt. I am really happy with where I am and the team. They're really supportive of everything I want to do and are working as hard as am I to become world champions. So that's good and the bike is trick! Anyway, right now we are heading to Belgium to do some training and testing in the sand. We have two weeks before Valkenswaard which is GP #1. To be honest I haven't felt this good in a while.

Meanwhile, in the USA my little sister wanted a dinosaur. So dad got her a goat. Trex is its name but now Zoey wants a whole farm so I'm not sure what is going to happen before I get back. There will be pigs, cows, lions and snakes everywhere. My lil' bro Kingston is one now and walking about everywhere. So funny!

My days are consisting of a lot of schoolwork. I'm taking three classes now in college – accounting, computer data and multimedia. It's bloody hard getting it all done but I know in the long run it will be better. Talking about school work, Professor Max has to get back to it now. So keep it real!

And come to Holland because I'm going to need all the support I can get to take on the 50,000 Dutch mafia around the #84 machine. See you there!

Max

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Q: Do you think that if you were able to begin your career again you'd win a world championship more quickly?
Alex Strong, Ivybridge
A: "It's a tough one. I think kids today get a lot more help, there's management around. I mean when I turned pro at 16 I was left on my own and the factory bike and production bike were completely different. So in answer to your question I believe that with the right help then, yes, I'm sure I would have won it a lot quicker."

Q: Does it surprise you that Britain hasn't produced another world champion since you won your title?
Kieran Wright, IoW
A: "Surprise? No. There are a lot of guys racing out there that don't really understand what that last 20 per cent is that you need to do to become a world champion. This is how I can help Tommy – what I did was to find good guys that can help him with his bike and technical things like that, then we have Kirk Gibbons as his trainer. I think the package we have for Tommy has been good for him and hopefully he can go on to win a world title. Nobody realises how tough it is to win that title – at the end of the day the majority of people are playing at it."

Q: You were one of the first Euros to ply your trade Stateside – were you treated as an outsider?
Roy Smart, Reigate
A: "Not at all, some of my best friends now are from those days. Jeff Emig and I still speak at least once or twice a week. They were great guys – Mike LaRocco, Mitch Payton to name a couple are still great friends."

JAMIE DOBB

THE LAST BRIT TO WIN A WORLD MX CROWN, 2001 125cc CHAMP JAMIE DOBB NOW – AMONG OTHER THINGS – LOOKS AFTER TOMMY SEARLE'S INTERESTS AND GETS TO SWANK ABOUT AT MOTOGPs AS A TOP MOTORSPORTS MANAGER...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Sutty

Q: Who was your most respected rival throughout your career?
Andy Ryan, Plymouth
A: "I'd have to say Paul Malin. I mean even though it was when we were kids the rivalry that we had was quite fierce and I think that it took us to the point that Greg Albertyn came over and got beat, we went over to America with Emig and LaRocco and we were able to beat them. I think the level that we raced at every weekend took us to such a level that it was hard to beat. I feel it's a shame that between us we didn't win many more world titles!"

Q: Do you get to attend every round of the MotoGP series as well as all the MXGPs?
Ben Hughes, Slough
A: "I do go to quite a lot because our management company is one of the largest management companies in the world and, for instance, I brought Cal Crutchlow into MotoGP so I still help look after him. Along with the Wasserman crew we're looking after guys like Bradley Smith, Chaz Davies and Gino Rea. On that note I was fortunate to be able to work with Marco Simoncelli and we're cycling to Italy in his honour to raise money for his foundation so please donate if you can!"

Q: Obviously having a manager is an added expense to a rider so what are the benefits of having one?
Dave Lock, Belfast
A: "[Laughing] It's probably best to ask Tommy Searle if he sees it as an added expense! I think that in his first year what Tommy was going to sign for I was able to get him a much, much better deal! There are bad managers out there but if you've got a good one then they're not expensive because a good one will allow the athlete to concentrate on what they need to be doing rather than worrying about money and contracts and on top will make an athlete more than they'd get on their own."

Q: Part of the job at WMG (Wasserman Media Group) is to try and introduce big outside sponsors into motocross. What does the industry need to do to make itself more appealing to these companies?
Ed Hutcheson, Chester
A: "I think it's already doing a good job, especially in the world championship. Giuseppe Luongo is providing a good platform for you to go and sell sponsorship from and I think it's all going in the right direction. It can always get better as there's always room for improvement."

Q: Describe the emotion you felt when you finally lifted your world championship?
Jerry Francis, Durham
A: "It's kind of strange really because it was more like a numb feeling – you've worked for something for so long that you think it's never going to happen. I mean the year I won it I broke my collarbone twice and was just thinking that it wasn't going to happen. When I eventually won it was like somebody just popped a bubble and it was just like I was dead tired with all the emotion and going through everything. It was just such a strange feeling, nothing like I thought it would be really."

Q: Is it true that you once bust one of your hairy boys?
Leon Walker, Lancaster
A: "Unfortunately it is. I did it at the NEC SX in '92 and still have the scars to prove it! Luckily for me I have quite a high pain threshold so while it wasn't something I'd fancy doing again it wasn't as bad as you'd imagine!"

Q: Carmichael, Nicoll, Thorpe, McGrath – you have to arm wrestle one, have a drinking comp with one, race Southwick against one and have a boys' holiday with one. Go!
Kevin Reid, Middlesbrough
A: "I'd arm wrestle Ricky, go on holiday with Kurt, race McGrath at Southwick and have a drinking comp with Thorpey!"

Q: Do you personally manage any riders other than Tommy Searle?
Ian Chedgey, Bradford
A: "Yes, I also manage Steven Frossard."

TOMMY SEARLE

NEXT MONTH

Travis is still waiting in the wings so in the meantime if you've got a question for Tommy Gun then fire it off to him at dbrproprobe@googlemail.com

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BRO SHOW!

THIS MONTH WE TAKE A STROLL TO THE PAR HONDA TRUCK FOR A CHAT WITH THE UK'S SPEEDIEST SIBLINGS, BEN AND NATHAN WATSON...

Interview by **JP O'Connell** Photo by **Rutger Pauw/redbullcontentpool**

DBR: Which actor would you like to play you in a film of your life?
NW: "Brad Pitt – girls love him!"
BW: "Jim Carrey – he's funny."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?
NW: "Like two weeks ago. Dad makes me do them if he's busy."
BW: "Two days ago."

DBR: What was the last lie you told and who was it to?
NW: "A few days ago I told Jamie McCanney that I came across Gee Atherton's bike track while out mountain biking to tease him as he loves bike jumps."
BW: "In my previous answer as I haven't cleaned an air filter for about a month!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?
NW: "I have a brief idea but I wouldn't like to ride the bike after as it would most likely blow up!"
BW: "No but I know if they tighten it makes your bike very slow as it's happened to me!"

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?
NW: "Melted chocolate cookies with Ben and Jerry's ice cream on top."
BW: "OK Diner chocolate milk shakes."

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?
NW: "If it was the only chance of winning then yeah, probably."
BW: "That depends on how much the race counts."

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas and if so what style are they?
NW: "No and I haven't owned a pair since I was 10!"
BW: "No."

DBR: What's the highlight of your career so far?
NW: "Winning both the Red Bull and the BYMX championships last year."
BW: "Qualifying first at the FIM Junior World Championships in Italy last year."

DBR: If you could be any motocross rider in the world for a week who would it be and why would you chose him?
NW: "James Stewart – his track looks amazing!"
BW: "Kevin Windham – he's got planes and everything!"

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?
NW: "No, I wouldn't blame something that hadn't happened."
BW: "Not that I can remember."

DBR: If you and your brother got into a fight who would win?
NW: "I'm bigger and stronger so I'd like to hope I'd win! But I'd never fight my brother anyway."
BW: "We've never had one but I'd probably lose!"

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?
NW: "The amount of money in my bank account!"
BW: "To be a bit taller."

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?
NW: "Ken Block – he's sick!"
BW: "Danny MacAskill."

DBR: If you could have any superpower for a week what would it be?
NW: "Be able to fly."
BW: "Invisibility."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?
NW: "Helicopter, fuel and a sat nav!"
BW: "Jet ski, dune buggy and a KLX110!"

DBR: What's your most prized material possession?
NW: "My car."
BW: "My iPhone."

DBR: What's your favourite race you've ever been in and why?
NW: "Duns BYMX 2011 – I passed my best mate in the last corner on the last lap of the last race to beat him overall!"
BW: "Everts and Friends where I raced GP riders on 85s."

DBR: Be honest, how often do you Google yourself?
NW: "Never!"
BW: "Never!"

DBR: What's your favourite TV show?
NW: "Top Gear."
BW: "Mr Bean."

DBR: One thing about your riding style that you'd like to improve?
NW: "Anything that would make me look tricker in photos!"
BW: "Nothing – I'm quite happy with my style…"

DBR: What's your favourite fast food?
NW: "Chinese takeaway."
BW: "KFC."

DBR: What's the worst motocross-related decision you've made during your career?
NW: "Not listening to Jamie McCanney telling me to ride my spare bike at Little Silver BYMX when I was on a 150 – it could have stopped me getting three DNFs in one weekend which would have got me the championship!"
BW: "I can't think of one, I haven't made many bad decisions yet…"

DBR: If you had to permanently give up either the internet, mobile phone or TV which would it be?
NW: "TV, I never watch it."
BW: "TV."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?
NW: "Last time I checked I had the fastest lap in the world on Dirt 3 for PS3!"
BW: "I sometimes talk out loud in my sleep!"


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Stuey Edmonds has been twisting the throttle on both sides of the Irish Sea

BLUE GROOVY!

THE SUPER-DRY START TO THE SEASON RESULTS IN SOME UNEXPECTED CONDITIONS AT THE IRISH CHAMPIONSHIP OPENER…

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

Round one of the Retink Irish Motocross Championship kicked off at Downpatrick Moto Park and with no rain worth talking about for some considerable time the usual mudfest season opener was transformed to a full-on blue groove hardpack affair – with jumps!

Challenging to say the least, many riders complained and others shrugged their shoulders and got on with the job in hand – besides, it was the same for everybody. Gordon Crocked marked his return to Irish championship action with a fine display of cornering without berms, taking the first win of the season aboard his Watt Motorcycles Kawasaki 450F.

Crockard took control of the race on the second lap and never looked back with Gary Gibson (TAS Suzuki) claiming second spot from hard-charging Suitor Brothers Racing rider Ricky Bird who was himself feeling the heat from the first MX2 pilot home, Stuey Edmonds aboard his Tyco Suzuki by TAS machine. Robert Hamilton filled out the top five after a slip during lap six.

As the pack rounded the first corner of the second moto it was Davy Gorman (AJ Elite Bathrooms KTM) who made the break, only to run out of steam with two laps remaining. Hammy was determined to capitalise on Crockard's less than stellar start and taking control towards the end of the moto he rode the wheels off his G&G Ross Suzuki, just managing to hold the triple British champion at bay by less than a second. Third across the line and looking better as the day went on, Wayne Garrett is fast finding his race pace aboard his JAR Honda – I would expect to see the #33 machine hit the front before long. The fast starting Davy Gorman finished a credible fourth with defending Ulster Premier champion Ricky Bird fifth.

In the final race of the Expert MX1/MX2 it was Jason Garrett aboard his 250cc AJ Elite Bathrooms KTM who lead for the opening lap until GC made his move to the front. Looking fully at home on the 450, Gordy controlled the race to the chequered flag and secured the points lead. Bird had an inspiring race, charging through from just outside the top 10 to within eight seconds of the Crock Star. Hamilton settled for another top three in the slippery conditions as Wayne Garrett, feeling the effects of armpump, eased off the pace to secure a bunch of points for fourth place just ahead of a consistent Davy Gorman.

It's fair to say that majority of the MX2 guys didn't get to spend a lot of time at the sharp end of the pack and for me it takes something away from the class when the seventh-placed man in the race is actually the class winner? It's also bloody confusing. But when the dust settled the computer screen provided the answer to the puzzle that was the MX2 standings which are lead by KTM-mounted Ed Allingham from TMC Honda pilot John Mera and Jim O'Neill. Stuey Edmonds is back in fifth after a DNF in the third moto.

By the time you read this the second round of the British championship at Canada Heights will already be logged into the history books but Blarney can't let a great return to top-flight racing by Team Ireland at FatCat Motoparc go unmentioned!

Graeme Irwin rode the wheels off his Samsung Yamaha and rewarded Embo's team with a podium in the MX2 class. Another one for the record books was JAR Honda-mounted Michael McCammond who scored 20th in the first moto and then ripped through the pack to record 14th in the second race of the day. A fall third time out left Michael with simply too much to do to get back into the points-paying places but he's fired a warning shot. Stuart Edmonds carded 7-10-10 for a fine ninth place overall which is a rock solid performance to build on.

The MX1 class features a few GP winners this year and it's going to be a fight for every point throughout the season. Irish interest is split in this class between Marty Barr, multi-Irish champ Wayne Garrett on the JAR Honda and Celtic brother Stephen Sword who's racing for the Irish-owned Tyco Suzuki by TAS team.

Marty was getting faster as the day went on and while finishing fifth overall may not have been what the LPE Kawasaki racer was looking for it was a solid start to the championship. And seventh wasn't a disaster for Swordy although it's no secret he fancies his chances for the title this season.

Nobody would have batted an eyelid if Wayne had been a spectator at FatCat – only a couple of weeks before he'd had a cage removed from his injured leg and while he has been working at his fitness in the gym there is no quick fix for being out of the saddle for 10 months! A crash knocked him out of the first moto while running 15th and he carded a pair of 25th-placed finishes to end the day. One word sums up that performance. Ballsy!

So it's all systems go on the Emerald Isle and with GC taking a step back from British and international races is it going to become a race for second place over here?

Stevie


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SOUTHERN COMFORTS!

The EWC opener in Chile was a big success

IN AN AGE WHEN TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN ECONOMIES ARE STALLING COULD SOUTH AMERICA BE THE NEXT BIG THING IN TERMS OF OFF-ROAD SPORT?

Words and photo by **Jonty Edmunds**

Living in a country that's closely linked to the downbeat Eurozone, it's hard for us motorcycle folk to get a handle on the relevance of emerging markets. It's even harder making the link between off-road bike sport and economies that are on the up and up. I guess like most I'm aware that places like Brazil are having things pretty good at the moment but so what?

As far as day-to-day life goes not a lot's going to change for any of us. We'll maybe eat a little more Brazilian chicken in our sandwiches but as far as the bigger picture's concerned nothing's really different for any of us. But when it comes to top-level racing the economic success stories of many South American countries is starting to have a very noticeable and direct impact.

Governmental support – hand-outs if you like – are essential in the ongoing delivery of top-quality sporting events. The knock-on impact of a large motorsport competition has been proved to have lasting financial benefits for the host town/region/country. Again, something that's hard to understand as in parts of the UK accessing such support is anything but easy.

The Dakar is the clearest example of what happens when two or three nations with growing economies and an interest in motorsport get together to support a major sporting spectacle. Sure, the Dakar left North Africa because of fears over competitor safety but the willingness of countries like Chile and Argentina to open their doors with a warm welcome – and probably throw a fair bit of cash in the direction of the organisers too – means the Dakar's not likely to leave South America any time soon.

Back to enduro. State support for events within many European countries is dwindling. Fact. Spain and Portugal, who have always benefitted from some healthy 'backing', are as nations enduring some pretty serious cutbacks right now. Morally, governments simply can't continue to support events like they were in light of mass redundancies and increasing unemployment. Interestingly, to date only five European countries have registered an interest in organising a round of the 2013 EWC series.

In South America things are different. With buoyant economies money is flowing through nations like Chile and Brazil in ways we in Europe can only dream of. And with money to spend, money is being spent – promoting national tourism through sport. F1 was the first major motorsport championship to buck the trend of continuously visiting traditional circuits and countries in favour of those where government money was being offered. While F1 looks east to places like Indonesia, India etc it's likely that South America will play an increasing role in off-road motorcycle championship.

Now that I've been to Chile for the opening round of the Enduro World Championship I've seen what a buoyant economy looks like – something we've not seen in the UK for a few years now. In motorcycling terms it means plenty of riders and numerous teams willing to try their hand at EWC competition.

But money isn't always the answer. Many will happily argue that it's in Europe where the EWC series should remain – places where the tradition of enduro lives strong. But what was interesting about the Chilean GP was the fact that in many, many ways it was better than a large number of European events.

It wasn't perfect – problems with the enduro test saw many riders' results suffer – but key issues could have and should have been resolved by the FIM before the start. In terms of promotion the event was great. In terms of the facilities the event was great. In terms of the understanding of what was needed, again the event was great. More track staff wouldn't have gone amiss but it was the support the event received from the public that convinced me that Chile is more than worthy of a place on the EWC circuit.

Unlike the GP of Mexico a few years ago where only a small number of spectators turned out to watch and unlike the EWC event in New York State where next to no-one attended, I'd say that a good 85 per cent of the many thousands of spectators in Chile were into bikes. Those that turned out to watch the event were passionate and knowledgeable off-road bikers. And nearly all with money in their pockets.

So as far as I see it, from a manufacturer's point of view at least, focusing a little more seriously on South America in the future absolutely makes sense…

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With the Nitro Circus 3D movie set to hit cinemas this summer DC Shoes – who have always been massive supporters of the 'crew' – are releasing a raucous range of fantastic footwear that features this fine pair of fine pairs. The entire collection is now online at **www.freestylextreme.com** so check it out, then check some out…

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GREAT SWAG UP FOR GRABS WITH DIRTZONE

*Every month we're going to be trawling though the pages of our dirt bike-devoted social networking site **dirtZone** searching for informed comment, intelligent insight, pretty pics and other stuff that just flat-out makes us laugh – and then handing out prizes to the **dirtZone** members who've posted it up. If you've got something to share then point your PC at **www.dirtbikerider.com**, sign up or log in to **dirtZone** and get posting! There's 5,000 loyalty points for every post we publish...*

COMMENT OF THE MONTH

"GOOD TO SEE DORREN COUTTS WITH A GOOD RIDE THIS YEAR. I FIRST SAW HIM LAST YEAR AT THE CANADA HEIGHTS MAXXIS RIDING AN OLD, UNSPONSORED YZF AND STILL GETTING TOP RESULTS."

*Okay, so he might like to dance like your dad but 44-year-old Surrey resident **Karl Steadman's** got it going on when it comes to commenting on **dirtZone** – the UK's dirtiest social network. Obviously a fan of all the underdogs out there, Karl's comment about PAR Honda's Dorren Coutts has won him a free pair of **Etnies**, some **Muc-Off** and **5,000 loyalty points.** Sweet!*



SOLE DOUBT!

What can I do to stop my boots wearing out so fast? I ride maybe once or if I'm lucky twice a week and it seems like I'm going through a pair of boots every six months because the soles wear through where I stand on my pegs – any ideas what I can do to prolong their life?

Darren, via email

Sounds like you must be running some sharp footpegs or you're skimping on the quality of your boots. Without knowing exactly what boots/pegs you've got it's hard to say what will help. We've found Gaerne SG-10s to be very resilient – Wakker swears by their sturdiness...

RIP OR ROLL?

Which are better – roll-offs or tear-offs? I've seen both used – sometimes at the same time...

Roger, via email

Performance wise it all depends on conditions Rog but environmentally speaking roll-offs are better because unless they bust open and let the film fly free they leave nothing behind. More and more companies are making roll-offs now and more and more clubs are banning tear-offs so it's probably best to use well prepped roll-offs. Pros will sometimes run a tear-off over their roll-offs if it's extra crappy to see them safely through the first few turns.



If your **dirtZone** post appears on this page you'll win a one-litre bottle of marvellous Muc-Off bike cleaner* – unless you live outside Britain in which case we'll send you some of Muc-Off's brilliant brushes and wipes instead...

One bottle per member per month



PICTURE OF THE MONTH

***Mathew Craig** sent us in this sweet shot of Gordon Crockard he took at Blackhill by email and we liked it so much we had no choice but to make it Picture of the Month. If you want to send in your sweet snap for consideration either upload it to **dirtZone** or email it direct to **anthony.sutton@dirtbikerider.co.uk** and we'll have a closer look!*

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

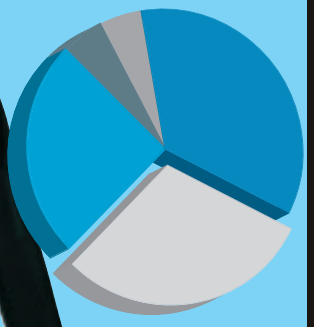
Free Riley's** not shy when it comes to filling out his **dirtZone** profile which is why we know one of this slightly hairy six-footer from Northamptonshire's naughtiest moments was when he flirted with his teacher at school! Blimey! A fan of both two-stroke bikes and four, Free rides frequently with his dad and brother so a pair of **Pirellis** will no doubt come in reet handy! As **dirtZone** member of the month Free also wins some **Muc-Off** and **5,000 loyalty points!



POLL OF THE MONTH!

Defending Poll of the Month champ **Ian Powell's** pretty much done the impossible by going out and snatching the title for the second month in a row. After winning with 'After these first few pre-season races who do you think will take gold in the MX1 GPs?' last month he's stepped up his game to ask 'If you could be a pro rider for a season what discipline would it be in?' The choices on offer are World MX GPs, AMA MX/SX, Enduro World Championships, Red Bull X-Fighters and Other. Most people are leaning towards a year in America while seasons in the MXGPs or X-Fighters are also proving popular. Since Ian's already won a Renthal jacket we'll see if we can find him something else in the range to wear and he'll also get some **Muc-Off** and **5,000 more loyalty points**. Damn!





CHATTER OF THE MONTH

"LONG, LONG AGO ON EACH SATURDAY OF A GP THERE WAS A MYSTICAL, MAGICAL TIME WHEN UP TO 60 MEN OR MORE WOULD TAKE TO THE TRACK AND BATTLE FOR AN HOUR UNTIL JUST 40 REMAINED. THIS HONOURABLE BAND OF 40 WOULD QUALIFY FOR THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACES THE NEXT DAY – THIS SESSION USED TO CREATE SOME BRILLIANT AND MEMORABLE MOMENTS. FOR SOME REASON I WILL NEVER FORGET THE ENTIRE VALLEY AT FOXHILL – ENCOURAGED BY SIR BURNICLE – ROARING JEFF PERRETT AROUND ONE LAST LAP AS HE TRIED TO QUALIFY FOR THE 250GP. HE MISSED BY ONE SPOT BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER THOUGH – TO EVERYONE THERE HE WAS A HERO. IT'S NOT LIKE THAT TODAY, NOW IN ORDER TO PLAY YOU JUST BECOME A FEE-PAYING MEMBER OF GIUSEPPE LOUNGE'S GENTLEMAN'S CLUB. IT JUST DOESN'T GENERATE THE SAME KIND OF RESPECT."

Colin Stewart (who's still no relation to Officer James, Jackie, Alec, Patrick or Rod) unleashes this corker – or did he uncork a leasher? – on unsuspecting dirtZone members who apparently aren't quite sure what to make of it. If you wanna join in on our Wallasey wonder's lash-out at Luongo then get yourself signed in to dirtZone…

VIDEO OF THE MONTH

Some shameless self promotion from our Deputy Dawger sees his self-edited Behind Bars with James Dunn film win this month's VotM. For his efforts he wins a kick in the nuts and no Muc-Off.




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Neither fish nor fowl, KTM's new Freeride is a hard bike to pigeonhole – find out next month what DBR chief MX tester Brad Fredley made of it at the world launch in Morocco...



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The man to beat! Tony Cairoli starts the 2012 campaign looking for his fourth straight MX1 crown

GLOBAL WARFARE!

THE WORLD'S FASTEST RACERS PREPARE TO DO BATTLE AS THE FIM MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FIRES INTO LIFE – HERE'S THE ESSENTIAL LOWDOWN ON THIS YEAR'S SERIES...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Sarah Gutierrez**





Steven Frossard (#183), Gautier Paulin (#21) and Clement Desalle (#25) all won GPs last season

Let's get straight to the point here – the MX1 world championship is this planet's premier motocross series. So forget all about the two-horse Dungey/Villopoto battle that the 450 class of the AMA Nationals is gonna be because with 17 GP winners and three world champions lining up to do battle the world series is the one that's really worth watching.

To prove that point eight different riders on five different brands of bike were able to win a moto or more in 2011 and the scene's set for a similar amount of diversity this time around.

Tony Cairoli has to start as favourite and I pity the fool who's brave enough to bet against him winning world title number six in 2012. If the charismatic Sicilian can pull it off this will be the fourth MX1 championship title he's won in a row and having only started racing GPs in 2002 it'll mean he'll have won more often than he's not. Impressive. Racing the factory 350 for the third year in a row, the #222 is equally as adept in the sand as he is hardpack so it's gonna take someone special to beat him.

And that man could well be Christophe Pourcel. Christophe already knows what it takes to beat Cairoli straight up in a championship as he's done it once before albeit way back in 2006. After fighting back from the brink of death following a crash at the Irish GP a year later the Frenchman miraculously recovered to win a pair of AMA regional SX titles and challenge for the outdoor title before cutbacks Stateside left him without a decent ride for 2011. A return to GPs mid-summer saw him win three motos and podium twice although an overall victory somehow eluded him – expect that to be rectified real soon in one-two.

A pair of Frenchmen who did win an MX1 GP in 2011 and are back in 2012 will be Steven Frossard and Gautier Paulin. Factory Yamaha rider Frossard managed to win five motos and two GPs on his way to the silver medal in 2011 during his debut year in the MX1 class. Paulin meanwhile won the only MX1 GP race he entered even if it was Fermo where Cairoli, Frossard and bronze medallist Clement Desalle were all non-starters. That said he still went out and spanked them and then put in an equally strong performance on a 450 at the MXdN a week or so later so he's got to be considered a threat to win.

Besides the aforementioned Frenchies, the biggest threat comes from Clement Desalle. The Belgian rider held the red plate for the majority of the 2011 season and was still in contention to snatch his first world title until a first turn crash at a Belgian National sidelined him for the remainder of the year. Desalle's highly motivated and has the right team behind him so basically everything's in place for him to dominate. If he doesn't win the title within the next two years then he probably never will.

The sixth and – in my mind – final title candidate this year is Evgeny Bobryshev. The Russian rider's career was turned around by his move to MX1 with CAS Honda and his meteoric rise has continued since joining the full-factory squad. A winner of three motos and a single GP in 2011, expect Evgeny to be even stronger this time around.

While those are my main six picks for success it'd be crazy not to give Tanel Leok, Jon Barragan, Ken de Dycker, Seb Pourcel, Max Nagl (who's out until June with a back injury), David Philippaerts, Rui Goncalves or Maxxis series leader Kevin Strijbos a mention as all eight are former GP winners – and in the case of DP19 a world champion – with the potential to win again. It's doubtful any one of them will win on a regular basis but they'll definitely be up at the sharp end at times during the season along with Xavier Boog (who's still yet to win a GP), factory TM's Anthony Boissiere and Davide Guarneri.

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British interest in the MX1 class is stronger than in recent years with three full-time Brits and a pair of imports racing for UK teams. Shaun Simpson lines up for Steve Dixon's Monster Energy Yamaha team and should be a solid top 12 runner. Although that sounds a wee bit mean when you consider how stacked the MX1 class is that's actually really good going for a rider like Woody. We should also see points scoring rides from Alfie Smith and Nathan Parker as the season progresses and their confidence grows. Nez's team-mate Matiss Karro has seemed to under-achieve in recent years but looks to have his mojo back on the super-tuned STR 350 – expect him to be sneaking inside the top 10 fairly regularly.

Other current UK residents who'll be giving the odd GP a go are LPE Kawasaki's Martin Barr, MVR-D's Bert Krestinov and Lanes Kawasaki's Marc de Reuver. All three have snagged a ride at the season-opener and all three are potential point scorers – especially de Reuver who let's be honest is sh*t hot around Valkenswaard…

The MX2 championship always offers up some exciting racing action and the 2012 edition will be no different. With the under-23 ruling ensuring that the class is packed out with up n' coming talent there are no previous champions and only three GP winners in the line-up this year although a wildcard appearance from reigning champ Ken Roczen is pencilled in for the German GP in September.

With Roczen out of the loop this year's championship looks likely to be fought over by 2011 runner-up Jeffrey Herlings, twice silver and last year's bronze medallist Tommy Searle and a man who's yet to stand on a GP podium at all – Arnaud Tonus. All three are armed with super-speedy steedery and all three have the skills to take the title. >>


Steven Frossard


Ken De Dycker


Fast but inconsistent, Tanel Leok is unlikely to be a regular podium visitor



Jeffrey Herlings is virtually unbeatable in sand but does have weaknesses



Gautier Paulin has a very impressive strike rate on a 450



Rapid Russian Evgeny Bobryshev should add more GP wins to his CV in 2012

RACES IN PLACES!

THE INS N' OUTS OF THE ONE-TWO SUPER SCHEDULE...

While getting to an overseas race seems to be getting more and more expensive the pleasure you actually get from witnessing a motocross grand prix in a foreign land is frikkin' priceless. Here's a raucous rundown on where you can see the world's motocross elite in action this summer…

ROUND 1 – VALKENSWAARD, THE NETHERLANDS, APRIL 9

The series kicks off on Easter Monday in the black sands of Valkenswaard which is traditionally one of the tougher – and better – races on the calendar whether it's wet or dry so as a starting point for the series it's the perfect place to be. Situated just south of Eindhoven, Valkenswaard's a really easy place to get to by air, road or rail so you can expect this Bank Holiday bonanza to be ridiculously busy!

ROUND 2 – SEVLIEVO, BULGARIA, APRIL 22

The Bulgarian round of the championship is one of my favourites as the Sevlievo circuit is pimped to the max with massive scrubby jumps, huge climbs and long fast descents that make it one of the more exciting circuits to watch – and shoot – on the GP calendar. But although the action comes thick and fast all weekend long the atmosphere can sometimes be lacking because the crowds are usually on the small side but that makes wandering through the pits a way more pleasurable experience so it's not all bad.

ROUND 3 – FERMO, ITALY, APRIL 29

Fermo's a bit of an oddity in that it's an old-school Italian hillside circuit that's actually been made a million times better by being dug up and sculpted into a modern motocross playground. Having hosted the season ender for the past couple of years, injuries and indifference have hampered the quality of competition witnessed at this race but that'll all change in 2012 as the series will be warming up nicely following the opening two gambits.

ROUND 4 – GUADALAJARA, MEXICO, MAY 13

Although based in central Mexico rather than SoCal the going at Guadalajara is quite similar to Glen Helen which has to be a good thing – or bueno if you're a local hombre. Organised by former world champ Sebastien Tortelli, not a lot else is known about the venue for the fourth round of the series but it's pretty much a given that Youthstream will give it a good going over before the middle of May – Teka waves anyone?

ROUND 5 – BETO CARRERO, BRAZIL, MAY 20

Held at the world's biggest theme park – Beto Carrero World – the Brazilian round of the championship could well be a glimpse into the future for the FIM series. Sculpted from a piece of ground that's as flat as a pancake and surrounded by spectator terracing and stands, the Beto Carrero motocross circuit has a beautifully lush infield that gives the whole place an F1 feel. With a plethora of roller coasters and kart tracks to tear up, this weekend away's gonna be an all-time favourite for the Youthstream folk, teams and riders so expect it to be back on the calendar next year n'all.

ROUND 6 – ST JEAN D'ANGELY, FRANCE, JUNE 3

After the Latin American getaway it's back to reality with a raucous rock-fest of the mineral – not music – variety. St Jean is a nice enough circuit and everything but the racing surface leaves a lot to be desired as it's slicker than an oiled-up stripper and carries more extra stones than the members of a Fat Fighters meeting – boom! That said St Jean d'Angely is a great facility for fans with plenty of good viewing that gets packed out by a very vocal and enthusiastic crowd so the atmosphere is usually great.

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Elliott took what he thought was a full-time GP ride

WHAT NO EBB?

THE INS AND OUTS OF ELLIOTT'S NO SHOW...

A shock announcement to come out at last year's Dirt Bike Show came from the HM Plant KTM UK team who let everyone know they'd signed Elliott to run a full season of MX2 GPs. Only he's not.

It seems that when the KTM UK team were offering out a GP ride they were jumping the gun slightly as they're not an officially recognised (by Youthstream) MX2 team – MX1 yes, MX2 not so much. This means that not only are Elliott and his MX2 team-mate Sean Mitchell missing from the entry list for round one in Holland but they'll only ever get an entry for a GP as reserves.

And even if injuries decimate the field it's possible for the recognised teams to choose who replaces their rider having bought the starting spot for the season – for example Steve Dixon could call on Mel Pocock to race at Valkenswaard in place of Zach Osborne.

Since there are 38 spots from 40 taken by official teams and a couple of promoter chosen wildcard entries, Mitchell and EBB could be waiting some time to get a GP ride this year although they are thought to be near the top of the reserves list should a space become available. Time will tell on that one…

ROUND 7 – AGUEDA, PORTUGAL, JUNE 10

A June date for the Portuguese round of the series will ensure it's hotter than hell at Agueda which isn't so great for riders, teams and media folk whose laptops have been known to literally sizzle to a complete stop in the Agueda press tent but will make for a lovely weekend in the sun for everyone else. This round always seems to be popular with British fans who annually flock to the Agueda circuit that's famous for its big jumps, elevation changes and bright red sandy soil. Overall viewing is good and the amphitheatre setting creates a great atmosphere. Agueda is not a million miles from either the Porto or Lisbon airports and is also close to the beautiful Atlantic coast! Surf's up dudes!

ROUND 8 – BASTOGNE, BELGIUM, JUNE 17

Not a lot is known about this late addition to the schedule although history buffs will know the name Bastogne as one of the towns that was fought for tooth and nail during WWII in the Battle of the Bulge which has absolutely nowt to do with Weight Watchers, mmmkay? Expect a soil-based circuit built to Youthstream specifications – Teka waves anyone?

ROUND 9 – UDDEVALLA, SWEDEN, JULY 1

In the land of IKEA and ABBA sits a motocross track that's slick and one-lined but actually provides plenty of good racing as passes take some planning and mistakes are easily made meaning riders swap positions almost continuously through the pack. Come MXGP weekend Uddevalla is annually packed out with northern European race fans who like to make a full weekend of it so it always has a great party vibe – get a flight to Stockholm and come join the fun!

ROUND 10 – KEGUMS, LATVIA, JULY 15

Now established as a regular stop on the world championship tour, Kegums is another sand-based track but rather than getting deep and whooping out this place just gets choppy and rutty but stays super-fast! Situated just a stone's throw from Kegums' town centre and only 40 miles from the country's capital Riga this place is perennially packed out with eastern European race fans. It used to be possible to fly directly to Riga with Easyjet but they've pulled the plug on that service so now your best bet is Ryanair…

ROUND 11 – SEMIGORJE, RUSSIA, JULY 22

Another new venue on the schedule is Semigorje in Russia which also hosted this year's FIM snowcross championship, apparently. That's about all anyone knows about this venue other than it's in Russia, somewhere north east of Moscow and gets snowy in winter. Ummm, Teka waves anyone?

Speedy Scot Shaun Simpson will have a fight on his hands in 2012



Xavier Boog goes into 2012 looking for his first GP win



Rui Goncalves needs to step it up to stay with team-mate Bobby

For most people Herlings starts as favourite and after dominating Valkenswaard last year is likely to hold the series lead after round one. As well as sick sand riding skills, Herlings and his factory KTM are great starters and so more often than not he's out front early on while many of his rivals are mired midpack. If he can consistently holeshot and then break away from the pack in the first couple of laps then he's gonna be a very hard man to beat over the course of the year.

If anyone can hand it to Herlings then it has to be our very own Tommy Searle. There's no doubting that Tommy's ridiculously fast, incredibly fit and mentally tough but his one stumbling block in 2011 was his starts. However, Tommy already feels that this year's Kawasaki is much quicker than last year's bike and he's positive he'll be up there from the off instead of charging to the front from outside the top five. Another thing to consider is that this is Searle's last chance to win the MX2 world title before he ages out at the end of the year and he's highly motivated to make it count.

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The third of the major contenders is Arnaud Tonus. The British champ is getting better and better all the time, is good in sand and on hardpack and is armed with a very fast and sweet-handling motorcycle. Although Tonus has not yet stepped on the podium at a world championship round (he's twice lost out on tie-breakers for third overall) he has won qualification heats so his speed's not in question and he's also very consistent – 2012 should be the year that Arnaud steps up to become a title contender.

Going off last year's results Max Anstie should be the best of the rest on the Gariboldi Honda although you can never count out Tommy's team-mate Joel Roelants or Jeremy van Horebeek who gets another shot on the factory KTM. Pre-season illness should make the start of the year tougher than it needs to be for the third factory KTM teamster Jordi Tixier while Zach Osborne's collarbone break will mean he's far from his best in the early season if he's even able to ride at all. That's a real shame because the West Virginian was on it and would've been a contender for the title otherwise.

Besides Tommy and Max, Jake Nicholls is the only other full-time Brit competing in the MX2 world series this year and will be looking to finally take a top 10 ranking at the end of it all after narrowly missing out in 2011 when a pre-season leg injury made sure he missed the first third of the season. Changing allegiance from the HM Plant to Nestaan JM KTM team will do him no harm at all and more top five moto finishes like he scored at Loket last year are surely just around the corner.



Tommy Searle starts the season as our best bet for a British world champ

TOMMY TOPPER?

TWO TICKS WITH MX2 CHAMPION-ELECT TOMMY SEARLE...

DBR: *So Tommy, 2012 is your last chance to be MX2 world champion – can you do it?*

TS: *"Obviously I want to be world champion. I feel like I've put a lot of work in and my goal is to be world champion this year because I don't have another chance in MX2. I know that it's not my last chance to be world champion because I'm going to be up there in MX1 fighting for world championships right away but I want to get the job done this year. People doubt if I can do it and to prove them wrong will be a nice feeling."*

DBR: *Do you ever look back to 2009 and think 'if I hadn't gone to America that would have been my year'?*

TS: *"Sometimes…but different stuff happens. Musquin and Paulin really upped their game that year when Tyla, Cairoli and myself all left and although it did seem like a lot easier year to win it the boys stepped up so fair play to them."*

DBR: *Dumb question but what's it gonna take for you to be champion this year?*

TS: *"I just need to be on my A-game and be the fastest at the track. It's not going to be easy but I've been working hard. I just need to be there in the sand races and collect as many points as I can because Jeffrey's fast in the sand and to beat him in at those races is going to be tough. But there are only two real sand GPs this year and I believe I'm the fastest guy on all the other tracks so I think I'll be getting a lot of GP victories too."*

DBR: *Aside from you and Herlings who else will be up there?*

TS: *"I think Zach's going to be fast and also Tonus has stepped it up but I think if you're looking at the championship it is going to be between me and Jeffrey. It's a long series and it's not easy to win a world championship and that's why it's so prestigious – there are a lot of rounds and you have to be on the ball at every one of them. It's a long season and lots of things can play a part in it – injuries, illnesses and breakdowns so you have to have a little bit of luck. At the same time you also have to get the job done yourself."*

DBR: *What have you done to increase your chances of winning?*

TS: *"I think I'm a little bit more prepared this year and also our bikes are much better than they were. Last year you could see that the KTMs were holeshotting almost every race 1-2-3 but I know that our bikes are a lot better this year and I think I'll be getting holeshots. That's what I need because you can't win from the back especially against someone as fast as Herlings.*

"I don't think Jeffrey will be as strong as Ken was last year but even so when someone as fast as that gets out front so early it's possible for them to get away if you get stuck in the pack. It's the same for him though and I know that if I get a good start he's not going to catch me – that's just how it is. I only holeshot one race last year but it's not gonna be the same this time around."



Jake Nicholls is looking for top fives and podiums



Brit champ Arnaud Tonus could feature strongly in MX2

ROUND 12 – LOKET, CZECH REPUBLIC, AUGUST 5

Loket has a real old-school vibe to it and excellent viewing makes it a real fan favourite. A full-bore blend of cambers, hills, bumps and jumps ensure there's always plenty going on even if the high speeds and sketchy surface aren't particularly to the riders' liking. The track's ace, the beer's cheap, the women are beautiful and the fried potato snacks are served up with succulent sausages so in my mind all those things add up to make it a must attend race, am I right?

ROUND 13 – MATTERLEY BASIN, GREAT BRITAIN, AUGUST 19

*Without doubt the best GP on the world championship calendar with the best track and the best fans. Okay, so the toilets can get a wee bit nasty and you might have to remortgage your house so you can afford to get in the pits but this is still the only chance you'll get to see all the best racers doing their thing in the UK this year so what are you waiting for? Oh, the weekend of August 18/19 obviously – duh! Situated just off the A31 near Winchester – be there or be a big f*cking let down.*

ROUND 14 – LIEROP, THE NETHERLANDS, SEPTEMBER 2

Although the layout at Lierop looks quite simple and boring, the sand is so deep it actually ends up being the most technical track on the schedule. Rougher than The Bear's arse and offering a plethora of different lines to choose from it takes a really smart, prepared and fit rider to win at Lierop so you know that whoever's stood on the podium at the end of the day really deserves it. The track's situated about 12 miles north east of Valkenswaard which makes Eindhoven an excellent place to base yourself for the second time this year…

ROUND 15 – TBA, TBA, SEPTEMBER 9

The TBA circuit is always a firm favourite with the TBA fans who blah blah blah TBA whatever. C'mon Youthstream sort it out, t'season's about t'start… I bet the Teka Waves are awesome though, eh?

ROUND 16 – TEUTSCHENTHAL, GERMANY, SEPTEMBER 23

If all goes to plan MX2 world champ Ken Roczen should be racing the last round of the championship and if that happens then you know you need to be there! You'll also want to be there to see Tommy crowned n'all unless he wraps it up a round early at the TBA GP in TBA where he had those Teka Waves nailed! Seriously though Teutschenthal is one of the finer circuits for spectators in GP motocross and this tight, hardpack circuit is packed full of elevation changes and jumps! Situated in the east of the country, the facility still has an old communist charm and is infamous for its monster beer tent and Saturday night party! Fly into Leipzig then head west to Halle – Teutschenthal is just a stone's throw further!





STARTER'S ORDERS!

ROB'S BACK IN TRAINING FOR HIS – AND PROJECT SHED 3's – GRAND COMEBACK ON APRIL 8. THE PROBLEM IS THAT EVEN THOUGH IT WON'T START YET HIS YZ465H IS STILL IN BETTER SHAPE THAN HE IS...

Words by Rob Bayman Photo by Andrew Walch

What's so wrong about wanting to wear your new duds on a night out? I thought getting dressed up in your latest kit was expected – good social etiquette even. Well judging by the looks I got when I headed down my local in my latest Italian threads I may have got it a little wrong. But, whatever, I reckon I look pretty good…

Anyways, back to the serious business! The date of completion is looming with PS3's first race in 30 years pencilled in for April 8 at Polesworth. The entry confirmation has just arrived in the post so in addition to preparing the bike I am in dire need of some self-preparation – mentally and physically. A lack of exercise (but not chocolate) over the last three years is clearly evident.

Myself and Andrew spent last Saturday piecing together the vast collection of new, used and original parts. Optimistically we thought the electrics we had would be fine – and one of the carbs we had would work – but we still have a lifeless PS3. This week will be dedicated to getting it running which will then give us just one weekend to set the bike up.

PS3 is undoubtedly close to firing up but just the small problem that it won't start is troublesome. We have a built-up bike, fuel, spark, exhaust and worn out soles on our boots from the endless kicking. We know the issue is with the many spurious parts that are untested and came with no knowledge of why were they discarded from donor bikes in the first instance.

This is not a mechanical issue – the mechanical items are sweet – but down to a combination of stator, coil and CDI taken from three different bikes in the hope that at least one combination will work. And with just one coil and one stator the combinations are not as variable as we would hope – especially with no spare 'running' bike to test them on. This is a problem for all restoration projects when second-hand parts are required.

Countless hours have passed chasing elusive or unavailable items – perhaps a Maico would have been the easy option as Bill Brown has just about everything available on next-day delivery. Pleasingly, more and more Yamaha parts are appearing on the web but you have to search hard enough.

Among my missing items I was in need of brake shoes. Plenty of Chinese shoes are available but I wanted something I felt I could trust from a known source. EBC filled my front hub with their composite material lined shoes – fortunately they came with springs in the box as the original fronts were completely missing. The items I have feature slotted linings which prevent mud coating the contact faces. The original rear shoes will remain for now.

Our next item acquired this month was a YZ490 exhaust. The handmade pipe is well on though incomplete and not priority. There is a difference with pipes between 81H and 82J models – the 82J had the female cup which seals the pipe connection on the silencer whereas the 465H had the female cup on the pipe. It's not rocket science to make one fit the other and a short internal sleeve has been welded into the 490 pipe to make it fit. Furthermore I expect a DEP silencer will make the 490J pipe fit the 465H.

Another great find in the bowels of Pete Mathia's workshop was a complete Yamaha carb, slightly worn but still the real deal and fortunately fitted with the elusive swan neck cable adjuster. The adjuster was becoming a problem as it was a discontinued Yamaha part rather than a Mikuni part.

As already mentioned, I am aware that my physical preparation will let me down so I've been to the practice venue at Cefn Parc with some kit in my boot. My interest in a 1979 Maico 440 and its rider Russ Kallenberg paid dividends. After chatting for a few minutes, Russ invited me to turn a few laps aboard his pride and joy – this was my first ride in over three years so, as expected, I hurt from the soles of my feet to the top of my head but what a brilliant experience and a crucial first ride.

I was ready to empty the contents of my stomach at Andrew's feet after just a couple of photographs but I still snatched a further couple of laps on Jon Morgan's KX450.

After making the switch from a '79 Euro bike to a present day Japanese model my immediate thoughts were just how little bikes have progressed or maybe it's just that the Maico was so advanced? Comfort and ergonomics have improved greatly from a riding perspective and were a little more noticeable than the brakes and power delivery but not the light years difference I had expected.

I could turn the Maico virtually as tight as the Kawasaki, although not as smoothly. The general feel was not so different – admittedly the Kawasaki suspension was plush but most noticeable was the ease of function on the big KX. Years of subtle changes have enhanced modern bikes rather than dramatically changed them although without doubt I would fancy my pathetic chances in any whoop section more on a modern machine.

So I decided that if you ignore the lack of fuel-injection, digital-mapping, water-cooling, fully adjustable progressive suspension, working brakes, footrests that don't dig into the soles of your boots and a clutch that doesn't need 10 friends to help you pull it to the bars the 30-year-old Flying Pig aka PS3 is cutting edge stuff.

Just need to get the bloody thing to start now…



Chris Birch and Alastair Sayer pair up in Manchester

MASTER BLASTERS!

BIKES, BACK-FLIPS AND SUPER-HOT TATTOO'D CHICKS – THE MASTERS OF DIRT HAVE GOT EVERYTHING EXCEPT, STRANGELY, ANY DIRT...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**



Pyrotechnics are hot, Fuel Girls are frikkin' hotter!

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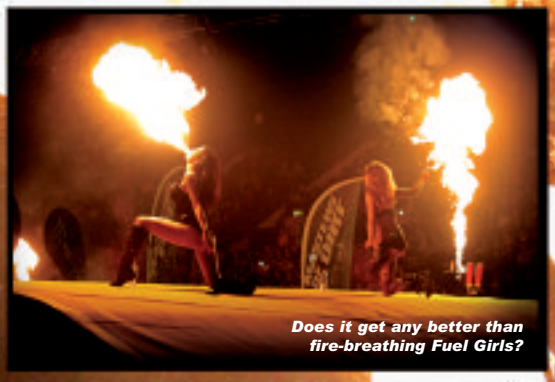


BLAKE WILLIAMS

BILKO'S BACK!

"England's great – I've been here a couple of times and it's always a good place to travel to. Stoked to be here – got to see Man City versus Sporting last night which was sweet and I'm going to another game tomorrow night and then Man City against Chelsea on Wednesday. I'm a big football fan. I also want to get out on the town and find out what the night life's like."





Does it get any better than fire-breathing Fuel Girls?



Synchronised flipping

"Masters of whaaat?" "Masters of Diiiiiiiiiiirt!" Whipped into a frenzy by MC Torsten Pullich, the fans react as one screaming bunch of en-masse maniacs as the Monster Energy-backed freestyle roadshow blazes a trail first through London's Wembley Arena and then, two evenings later, Manchester's MEN Arena.

It's a carefully scripted, almost perfectly packaged high-octane mix of mental metal music and formation freestyle as petrolheads meet pedalheads, a sledhead and the fabulously feisty, fire-breathing Fuel Girls. And while it's smokin' hot in the Big Smoke it's bordering on explosive by the time the Masters of Dirt hit Manchester as the riders get their routines dialled and the Fuel Girls come close to combustion.

Bikes, back-flips and super-hot tattoo'd chicks who shake their asses and play with fire – what more could you want? Well how about a British hero to inject a bit of stiff upper lipness into proceedings? Whenever there's world class freestyle in this country Chris Birch gets the call and Swampy rarely disappoints. >>

COMANDI MOTO domino

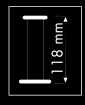
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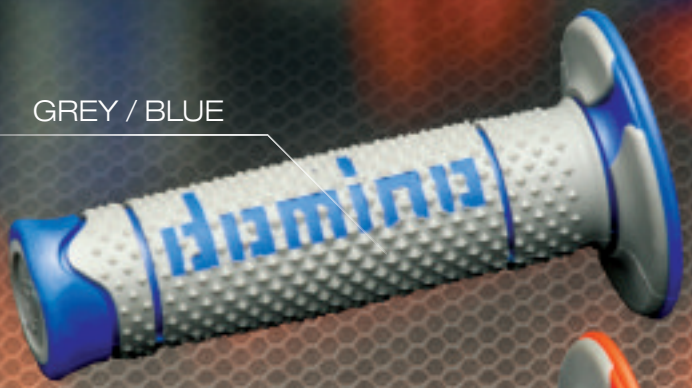
These new MX grips they have a 'pyramid' concept which are different sizes on different sections of the grip. These have been designed after looking at where the pressure of the fingers and hands are and this has been developed as the best concept to give the aximum effect. Domino has chosen a softer compound rubber but this doesn't reduce the durability or strength of the grip.

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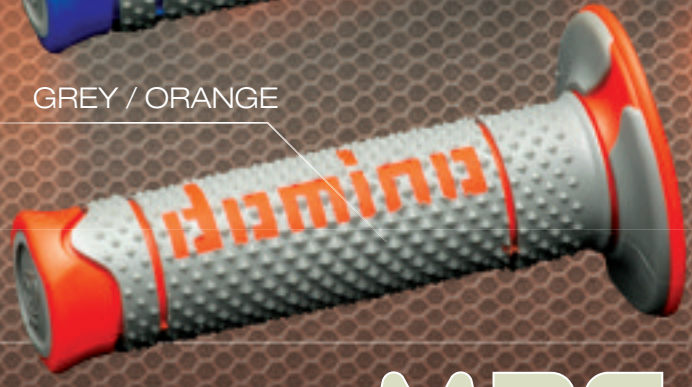
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Chris Birch gives the UK crowds a home hero to shout for

TORSTEN PULLICH

RABBLE ROUSER

"We've done London and Manchester and it's pretty much amazing. We try to build it up for people so they realise what's going on and that they have to be loud. This always works better in the second part of the show and the second part tonight in Manchester was insane."

STER STERS!

"Masters of the Dirt in the UK!" grins Chris. "I've known this event for many years now and I've actually gone to Salzburg to see it myself so I'm stoked to be a part of it. It's a great bunch of guys and it's very relaxed. It's a great atmosphere and I love getting the chance to perform in from of my home fans."

The show kicks off at a fair pace and then builds and builds throughout the evening as the Masters of Dirt set out to educate and entertain. >>



Bilko pulls a textbook lazyboy

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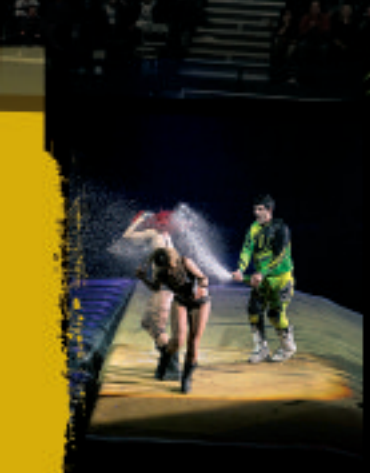
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Bilko and ET synchronise their cliffhangers









EDGAR TORRONTERAS

ET'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

"I love the whips and turndowns and fast combos with three or four tricks in one jump. For me that is when I feel at one with the motorcycle."

Highlights include a couple of sketchily landed quad flips from Jon Guetter that threaten to fire the American out of the stadium, Edgar Torronteras' insane whips, snowmobile backflips from Justin Hoyer and some super-sweet backflip trains.

The downside is that there's not a clod of dirt to be seen ('Masters of Wood' is how Sutty describes it) and maybe a few more riders would have spiced things up even more. But from dead centre of the stands I'm engulfed by a standing ovation at the end of the Manchester show which is all the evidence you need that the Masters of Dirt have got it right…

BEAUTY IS NOT ALWAYS SO BLACK AND WHITE



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FULL CIRCLE!

IT'S BEEN A WILD COUPLE OF YEARS FOR RICKY DIETRICH WHO TRADED OFF-ROAD STARDOM FOR A SHOT AT MX GLORY UNTIL THINGS GOT A WEE BIT WEIRD. HE'S BOUNCED BACK FROM THAT THOUGH AND IS NOW RETURNING TO THE WOODS TO TAKE ON THE EWC...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

If you try and use your appendages to tally up the amount of top-level motocross stars who've given up MX to go race in the boonies you'll soon run out of fingers, toes, schlong and nose because there are frickin' loads of 'em! Turn things around though and endeavour to count the full-time woodsmen who've given that up so they can make a living chasing their tail around a motocross track and by my reckoning you'll find only one.

That guy is Ricky Dietrich. Although still only 24 years old Dietrich's a WORCs and AMA endurocross champion, AMA Athlete of the Year, ISDE gold medallist and many would say off-road deity who made the brave move of giving up a financially lucrative ride with the factory Kawasaki off-road team to chase his dream of being a full-time motocross racer. But while living that dream things got a little crazy…

A solid enough start to the 2011 AMA Nationals while riding for Valli Motorsports saw Dietrich running seventh in the 450 points chase after five of 12 rounds before a double no-score at Red Bud, followed closely by an arrest on domestic violence charges – a felony offence that carries a minimum two-year jail sentence if convicted – that wreaked havoc with his season. Come the end of the year Dietrich had slipped to 13th in the series standings and had a severely tarred reputation to boot.

With few offers on the table for this year, Dietrich is returning back to his off-road roots even though it's a very different type of woods racing than he's familiar with. While the WORCs are, as Ricky puts it, "quite moto-style with endurance built in" the Enduro World Championship are a very different kettle of fish – generally much slower and way more technical.

And that's not the only change. Brought up on aluminium-chassised Japanese equipment, this will be Ricky's first season on European machinery with the steel-framed factory Husqvarna TE250 undoubtedly a very different beast to what he's used to. Then there are the living arrangements. Varese in Northern Italy is a long, long way away from the super-convenient 951 area-code that this Cali bro has based himself in for the past few years so for sure it's going to be a whole new experience but one that Ricky seems ready to embrace.

We hooked up with Dietrich at the Husqvarna factory team launch in Italy to get his take on his career so far, his move to Europe and the allegations that made him one of our sport's most reviled men… >>



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Moving to Europe has lead to one new experience after another for Ricky – including the BSEC

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After a career spent on Japanese bikes the American is loving the flex feel the Husqvarna gives him





DBR: You've won a bunch of WORCs titles, the endurocross championship and you've got gold medals in the ISDE but not so long ago you stated that motocross was your real passion and that was the career path you wanted to follow even though it could be potentially damaging financially. Looking back and considering you're now back racing off-road do you think that was maybe a mistake?

RD: "I still think it was the best decision I've made as far as racing goes and I have no regrets about it at all. I take everything I do as a challenge and a life experience and something that's gonna teach me something. What I made with the Yamaha deal was about a quarter of what Kawasaki offered me to race off-road but for me it was more about the opportunity – I wasn't a big name in motocross and it was kind of a risk for everyone.

"I learned so much from the experience and it taught me a lot of skills that I still use today. I had a couple of results that I was really stoked on and then it all went down the toilet. In the end it lead to me being here and if I hadn't taken that risk in the first place I could still be doing the same thing as I had been for years – racing for Kawasaki back in the WORCs. So I feel it was the best decision for me and at this moment I couldn't be happier."

DBR: Your first race on the Husqvarna at the Genoa round of the SuperEnduro championship was far from impressive considering you're an AMA endurocross champion and all…

RD: "Yeah that really wasn't good. I just really wasn't ready to race, I had to give back my bike after the motocross season in America and I didn't have a bike until I came out here. I think that race was maybe the fourth time I'd ridden the Husqvarna and I'd only been doing very minor training. Needless to say I was struggling just to finish – I didn't feel good at all and at that time I hadn't gelled with the bike. I hope nobody takes that performance and thinks that's all I'm capable of – it was a sh*t weekend for me but I still wanted to go and let people see I was here. At the end of it I left with a smile on my face and I had to kind of suck it up even though I sucked."

DBR: Are you getting on better with the bike now you've spent more time on it?

RD: "I love it. It's a very fun bike to ride and it handles very well – I'm actually blown away with how well it handles. I think the steel frame helps a lot because it has a lot of flex compared to the Japanese bikes that are way more rigid. I'm really enjoying riding the Husky and for enduro I think it's the perfect bike."

DBR: And the team? It's got to be a major culture shock compared to what you're used to...

RD: "I find it cool because that they're so passionate about enduro here at Husqvarna and it feels like the enduro team is the premier team – we feel like we're #1 anyway.

"I'm still meeting everyone at the moment but Alex Salvini only lives two hours away from where I'm staying and we hit it off right away – we have a lot of fun riding and training together. We're both two riders from moto who are going full-bore into the enduro world. I've also spent a little bit of time with Matti [Seistola] and he seems super-cool and obviously Juha [Salminen] is awesome and anything I can learn from him will help me be a champion." >>



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CROSS-OVER!

DIETRICH'S DELVE INTO THE PRO MOTOCROSS RANKS...

With Ryan Villopoto sitting out of the 2009 AMA Nationals due to a knee injury, Ricky D was drafted from the factory Kawasaki off-road team across to the motocross squad so he could fill in for the five rounds that didn't clash with his WORCs commitments. Already a points-scorer at the opening round of the series at Glen Helen (which he raced on his beat-up WORCs practice bike), Ricky went on a scoring spree that summer – 7-6 at Freestone, 8-9 at High Point, 11-6 at Thunder Valley, 5-6 at Red Bud and finally 14-11 at Millville – proving that he had what it takes to hang with the best in AMA motocross despite struggling with the initial intensity of it all.

*"The Nationals are some serious sh*t and you've gotta perform very quickly – there's no easing into it like there is with a WORCs race which is two hours long. At those things we're just getting warmed up at the half-hour mark but in motocross the whole race is over by then.*

"Also at an AMA National you have to go out onto the track and post your fastest lap time in the very first practice session before the track gets too beat up – the times from that first session dictate whether you even qualify for the points-paying races and also gate pick for the whole of the day. Hats off to the guys that are able to go out onto the track and put in their very fastest lap of the day on lap two because that's impressive.

"The races I got to do on Villopoto's bike were bitter sweet for me but what I gained most from that experience is that I now know what the best riders in the world are riding – I felt how good it was and I know exactly what that set-up feels like. That knowledge really helps me set up whatever race bike I'm riding and even though I now happen to be racing for Husqvarna I can try and get the same feeling as what I had with that bike."



Tearing it up on a factory Kawasaki as Ryan Villopoto's stand-in rider

© hoppenworld.com



Ricky's a proven winner indoors



© Jonty Edmunds



© Jonty Edmunds

DBR: So what are your predictions for the year ahead?
RD: "I have no predictions for this year. I'm just here to learn the format – it's going to be a big learning year for me. Obviously everything's all new – the type of racing and I've got new surroundings. I kinda ended on a sh*tty note in motocross this past year and I really wasn't happy so for me 2012 is a big reset year. I want to get back to where I was having fun, enjoying racing and if I can do that then the results will come."

DBR: In the States it seems like a few off-road guys like yourself, Destry Abbott and Bobby Garrison have been able to make an impact on the national motocross scene – why do you think that is?
RD: "Off-road guys coming to motocross is kind of a new trend but at the same time off-road is now a young man's sport where it used to be all the retired motocross guys that went to off-road and kicked ass. The new breed of kids coming up in the WORCs are fast off-road but also in motocross too so you're seeing more riders who are good at all disciplines."

DBR: As an accomplished all-rounder riding for a manufacturer that has such an extensive product range is it possible we'll see you racing different disciplines in the future?
RD: "We already plan on doing the Italian motocross championship – or as many rounds as enduro commitments will allow – and if I weren't too old for MX2 we'd have done a GP or two this year as well. Another thing we've talked about is doing the European SX tour which would be a good way of easing into supercross for me and it would be a positive thing for Husqvarna as well.

"Their product is getting better and better every year and I feel that myself and Husqvarna could grow together – while I'm getting better as a rider and a person they're getting better as a race bike and product. I still have supercross and motocross career plans and I know that Husqvarna would love to succeed in those fields as well.

"You never know what's possible in the future and it might be that you see Husqvarna and myself working together in the AMA again or it could be that we do world enduro this year and world championship motocross next year – I'm a well-rounded rider so you just never know." >>

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DBR: Okay, so I have to ask – what's the deal with getting arrested?
RD: "It was just a sh*tty situation. At the time I wasn't happy with where I was at in my life and I think when you're in that negative state of mind you seem to attract negative people and that's who my girlfriend was – she was a very shallow and materialistic person who was only dating me because I was a pro motocross guy.

"The charges against me are completely false and my sister and four of my other friends who were there that night know that nothing happened but in America if the chick says something went down then she'll always win – that's just how it is. Even now the accusations against me have been proved to be false and that's not who I am, it's still reflected upon me with people not knowing what to think about me. It's been a real eye-opener, my life was sh*t and I attracted sh*t people. It really hit me that I need to get sh*t figured out."

DBR: Was that part of the reason you came to Europe – to get away from all that 'sh*t'?
RD: "Yeah a little bit. I think everything I'm learning about life right now I would have eventually figured out in the States but being here has just kickstarted the programme. I live a simple life and all the distractions of the outside world have been taken away – in America it's a totally different lifestyle, it's more materialistic, more plasticy and false. To get away from all that and really clear my mind to find what I like and who I am has been the most amazing experience of my life so far.

"Coming here has really refined me as a person. I don't regret anything I've done in my life but when I just started riding for Kawasaki I was 18 years old, making six figures, living on my own and life got crazy for a few years. I've come here, I've reset and I've discovered why I race – I really enjoy riding now. It's been the best decision I ever made for myself, my career, my future – everything. As far as going back home I don't care – I'm happy here."


© Sutty


Ricky didn't struggle with the switch from woods racer to MXer...
© Steve Cox


...and he's hoping the switch back will be just as smooth



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I think it was Spiderman who once said 'with great power comes great responsibility' and in my mind that was a message to all of us four-stroke owners. Basically – and I'm reading between the lines here – what Spidey meant was that if we wanna enjoy the massive spread of power a four-stroke engine offers then we're gonna have to work harder in the workshop to keep that massive spread of power from grenading itself to pieces the first chance it gets.

The early short-stroke four-poppers used to stretch valves for fun and regularly have valve-seat issues which meant valve maintenance became a regular feature for four-stroke riders – especially those who hadn't got their heads around not living on the rev-limiter! As time's gone by and rider attitude, design and technology have all improved it's less common that we see catastrophic failure although it's still very possible.

As well as changing the oil, one of the most frequent jobs you should do on your four-popper is check the valve clearances. Not only is this important if you want to keep performance at a premium and ensure your puppy starts easily it can also be a good indication of the general state of your engine – if you have a valve that's gap is ever tightening you know you need to whip that head off before the whole thing goes boom!

To make this tech clinic possible we hooked up with STR KTM's Ben Lightbown. Ben's one of the hardest working technicians in the pits and is currently reaping the rewards of spinning spanners for Matiss Karro whose KTM 350 we used as a base for this feature. Before you take on a job like this for yourself consult your workshop manual and make sure you have the right tools to see it through properly. If you're not comfortable with this or any other workshop task, either give it a swerve and drop your bike down to the dealership or ask a knowledgeable friend to show you how it's done – you'll pick it up in no time!





07 You'll need to remove the cam of the affected valve so start by taking off the cam chain tensioner making sure you remove the copper washer and rubber o-ring with it. Now remove the spark plug sleeve and undo the eight bolts that hold down the cam cap. When you've done that the cam cap should just lift off with a bit of a wiggle. Now you can remove the cam.

08 Lift up the rocker arm and remove the shim using a magnet. Check the size of the shim either visually – the size should be stamped on it – or using vernier calipers. You now need to change the shim so that measurement C will fall between A and B. Shims come in different sizes in increments of 0.05mm so by knowing what measurement C is you'll be able to figure out what size shim you need.

CLEARANCE TALE!

OUR SPEEDY SURGERY'S NOW OPEN AND STR KTM'S HEAD SPANNER-SPINNER BEN LIGHTBOWN IS READY TO SHOW US HOW TO CHECK VALVE CLEARANCES...

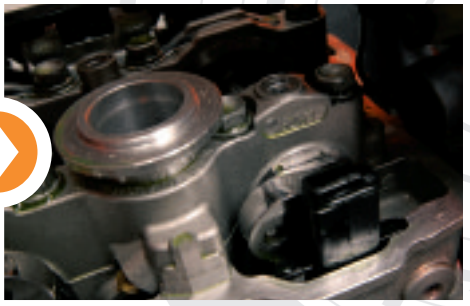
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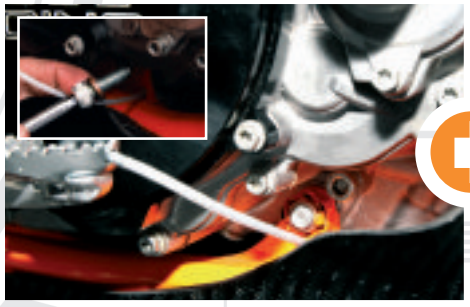
01 The first thing you need to do before working on your bike's engine is to make sure everything's thoroughly clean. That means taking off the seat and tank when you're powerwashing it and making sure the frame and top of the engine are absolutely spotless because you definitely don't want any lumps of dirt dropping into the engine when you've got the cam cover off. I know this one's spotless so I can crack on with taking the seat and tank off.



02 Remove the upper engine bracket, spark plug cap and breather pipe. Now remove the cam cover making sure that both seals come off with it – the main cam cover seal and also the small one that seals the cam cover to the top of the spark plug sleeve.



03 Turn over the engine so it's at Top Dead Centre (TDC). Every bike has different markings so check your manual to see what they are. On the KTM there are two flats that line up to dots on the cam caps.



04 A bonus to owning a KTM is that when you've found TDC there's a really clever locking device that holds the crank in position. To do this simply remove the Allen bolt that's just above the lower engine mounting bolt, remove the copper washer that's on it and then put the bolt back in. It should go in flush, if it doesn't rock the crank back and forward till it drops into to the cut out and then tightens up flush. The engine is now locked at TDC.



05 Check your manual to see what the valve clearance should be – there'll be a lower (A) and upper (B) limit for both the inlet and exhaust valves. Get your feeler gauges out and select the correct size blades. Slide the gauges between the rocker arm and the cam – you want the A blade to slide through easily and B not to go through at all. If this is the case on all four valves then no further work is required and you can skip to step 11.



06 However, if one or more of the clearances is out – for example the B blade slides through easily meaning the gap is too big or the A blade won't go through at all meaning the gap is too tight then you'll need to re-shim. It's handy at this point to know what the actual gap is. When you've worked out the gap write it down. We'll refer to this actual measurement as C from now on.



09 Fit the correct shim, return the rocker arm to the correct position, lift the cam chain back up with a magnet and then refit the cams making sure to get the timing correct. Now refit the cam caps and torque to the setting in your manual. At this point check both cams move back and forth freely before checking the valve clearance again with the feeler gauge – it should be spot on!



10 Now reset and refit the cam chain tensioner. Rather than run the stock hydraulic tensioner the STR team prefer to use manual adjusters as it allows them to retain full control over how tight the chain runs and the additional maintenance caused by a manual adjuster isn't a ballache because of the frequency the team services their engines.



11 Refit the spark plug sleeve and sealing ring, then refit the cam cover using sealant in the corners. Tighten down to the correct torque, refit and torque up the engine bracket, fit the spark plug cap and breather pipe. Remove the Allen bolt that's locking up the bottom end, replace the copper washer and then refit the bolt with a little Loctite and tighten it to the specified torque. Finally fit the tank and seat and start up the bike.

DR.DIRT

PRO SHOW!

HOW DOES THE SOUND OF A KXF250 THAT'S BEEN FULLY BREATHED ON BY PRO CIRCUIT TUNING LEGEND MITCH PAYTON GRAB YA? TESTED ON A PRIVATE TRACK? IN FLORIDA? WITH EVERYTHING OVERSEEN BY AN ALLIGATOR CALLED DAVE?

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Lance Bryson**



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This super-trick KXF250 is as close to factory as you can get without being crafted from unobtainium

Opportunities come along in life and sometimes you just have to grab them. One such opportunity presented itself along a couple of weeks ago when Team DBR had the chance to test a fully-loaded Pro Circuit KXF250 at endurocross promoter Eric Peronnard's HQ in Florida.

The bike is fully rebuilt at Pro Circuit HQ in California with the work overseen by Mitch Payton himself so it goes without saying this machine is basically as good as money can buy. The bike is loaded with the absolute best of the equipment used by the multi-championship winning team and, as described to me, it is the next step down from the full-on team race bikes which are basically built to last the exact amount of time required for one race weekend. That's known as running close to the line but I guess that's why Mitch P has won so many championships both in SX and outdoors…

This particular road/air trip to Florida involved my good friends Big Igg and Sean and Ian Cater. We went to Florida with a mission to hit the Daytona Supercross and bike week as well as making this awesome test happen. As you will read later in this issue the SX was a tad on the wet side but I absolutely loved it. What a test for man, machine and hairy boys as the bravest went for the biggest triples even in those conditions. Hats off gentlemen…

Please bear with me as I set the scene for this quite extraordinary test venue. Eric P owns a fair chunk of prime dirt biking heaven situated 20 minutes from some of Florida's greatest surfing beaches. He has built a 'friendly' track which is great for testing with mainly sandy going and a couple of hard terrain sections thrown in. There is of course a small endurocross section for the AMA promoter of the year.

The track winds itself around a lake which, with its small island, is the home of a fully wild all-singing, all-dancing alligator which Iggy decided to name Dave. I have feelings for Dave as he is quite possibly the coolest creature on Planet Earth. This prehistoric killer simply sunbathed and cruised around its hood while I blasted out the laps for Lance the Camera. Cool as feck!

As I said in the intro this bike is loaded. And to own one just like it you would have to be loaded as well. The bike comes to EP with a spare motor so when he hits 20 hours he can send motor one back for a full rebuild and fit motor number two for continued riding. That is 20 hours for EP and anything down to 10 for a full pro rider.

The motor has every major area upgraded from gearbox, crank, head, valves, clutch and piston. This is full-on, no-expense-spared fire-breathing motor work, built to be used at the highest level for an exact amount of time. The headwork is extensive with in-house secret flow work and reshaping to match the piston. These motors are not allowed to be opened by anyone not involved at Pro Circuit HQ and, as such, Mitch is able to keep his advantage in the business of rapid motorcycle development.

The chassis is equipped with Factory Showa fully-tuned units to the front and rear and all running gear including handlebars is taken care of by the 'Mighty from Blighty' that is Renthal. It goes without saying that the bike is fitted with the finest in Pro Circuit exhaust systems but Eric asked Mitch to make him a bike that would run great with the European noise limit tail pipe. Good work EP – keeping the noise down! This bike oozes quality and expense but would it all add up once it was fired up?

The bike's fitted with Carmichael-bend Renthal Twinwalls so all was comfortable and I was having trouble containing my excitement as we started the beast and gave it a slow warm up. I was jumping around in the Florida sun waiting to get my hands on the bike while Dave was cruising around hoping to get his teeths into me. It couldn't possibly be that much better than the already good KXF250 could it? I was soon to find out…

The track was perfect with some moisture around so it was fair game to take a steady couple of laps before trying to hit out a few >>



"Hello Dave!"



Big Igg ligs out



There's lots of extra power but it's incredibly usable



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Martyn gets ready to rip it up on the new test steed around Rushmead

with the bike fully opened up. What happened next was brilliant. Basically, I have never ridden a bike which makes so much extra power in a more friendly way as this one. From the first incremental opening of the throttle to the very high rev limit the bike produced incredible and silky smooth power…

The sand was trying to sap the ponies but the motor was laughing, singing and dancing through the deeper stuff. What a bike! Handling as usual was slightly soft for me but this is absolutely understandable as EP is half my size. The chassis did not misbehave and the factory Showas took the hits with no sign of bottoming. The chassis complimented the motor perfectly and I knew I was experiencing something special.

The power delivery made sure the bike was propelled forwards at an awesome rate from every corner and jump section to the point I was over-shooting the 180-degree turn at the end of the rhythm roller straight just about every lap. This was a fourth gear flat-out straight and I just wanted to keep hooking it up the box and let her rip and rev for about another half-mile! What a blast! This bike goes right to the edge of what I thought was possible and then keeps going some more.

For most of us this kind of performance is unobtainable from a financial point of view. Mitch Payton and his Pro Circuit crew are making this kind of performance available at a price. A big price. But it's great to have dreams and, believe me, this bike is now popping up in mine most nights.

Many thanks to all involved in making this test happen. And Dave…



© Mitterbauer H.

Eric preps his bike while Wakker exaggerates





NEW ADDITIONS…

MEET THE FLEET!

It's all about the bike here at DBR and our test fleet has just been augmented by two more fine machines – Suzuki's RMZ450 and a Husaberg TE250 two-smoker.

The RMZ will be hitting the MX tracks of the south in the very capable hands of Mr Martyn Tucker as he flies the DBR flag while on testing duties in the 35+ Phoenix Tools Championship. As reigning champ the duties are safe in his hands (meat hammers) and Martyn brings a huge amount of experience in racing to the team so we are all stoked to have him on board.

I've been pounding out the enduro and endurocross laps on the 'Berg at test HQ here in sunny Wiltshire and this bike brings me a lot of joy. I haven't spent much time on two-strokes since I last rode Romaniacs a couple of years ago so my enthusiasm is at an all-time high. The 'Berg comes equipped with a dual power switch as standard as well as closed cartridge forks and a sump guard. The bike is ready to race at world level straight from the crate. The mapping has been useful when riding the enduro loop at Rushmead as the weather has been wild at times so the 'softer' power setting has been getting a lot of use. I hope to race the 'Berg at the next sprint enduro so that will be another great test.

Martyn took care of the RMZ running-in process around the track at Rushmead and gently eased the motor into its stride over a two-hour period of 10 minutes on followed by 15 minutes cool down each time. The motor is starting perfectly and running quiet and smooth. Martyn's initial impressions of the bike over his current 2010 model are directed towards the vast improvement in the power delivery. The power is super-smooth and linear which makes the bike very easy to ride while still producing fast lap times.

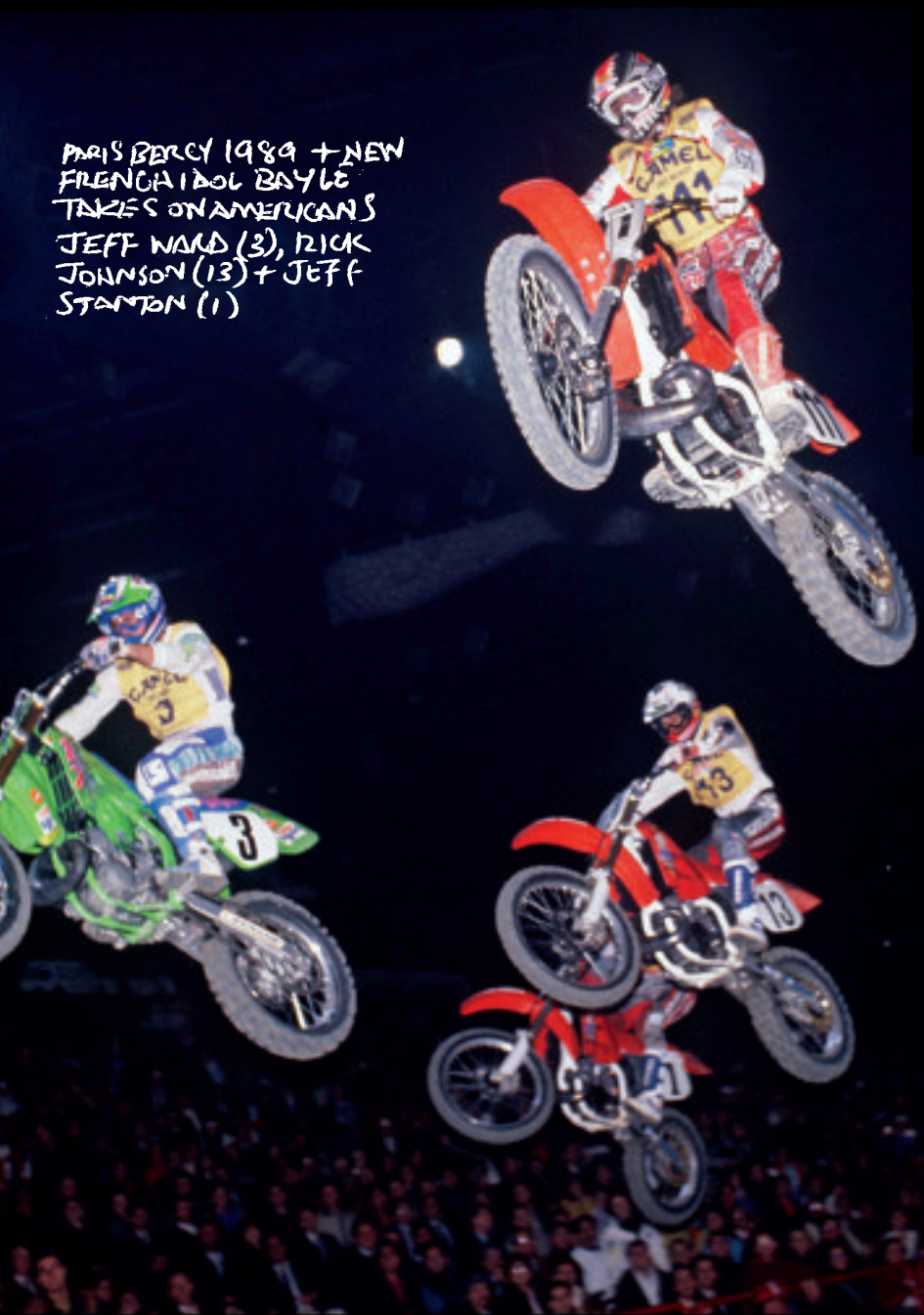
The roll-on delivery stays smooth throughout the range and makes finding grip easy. We have some bolt-ons coming for the RMZ to take it to the next testing level so look out for next month's updates…

GLORY DAYS!

A RECENT PRO-PROBING SETS JACK TO THINKING ABOUT SOME OF THE EPIC DUELS HE'S SEEN IN ALMOST 50 YEARS AS A MOTOCROSS FAN...

Words and photos by **Jack Burnicle**

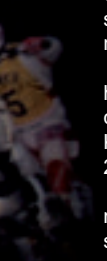








***JACK BURNICLE** is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...*



When faced with a Pro-Probing in these illustrious pages two issues ago I fielded a last-minute question sent in by the equally illustrious Stefan Everts. 'Which race was the most memorable and exciting from your career?'

I'd already answered a similar query from Tina Bugler who had put it like this. 'Of all the hundreds of motocross races you must have seen, which stands out as the best?' Since boyhood I've watched and wallowed in the thrills of scrambling, then motocross and eventually MX GPs for nigh on 50 years. So where on earth would you start?

I'd answered Tina's question like this. 'Tons of them have been tremendous. But I'll choose two former national champions – Ryan Hunt and Greg Hanson – both on KX450F Kawasakis at the Vets MX des, Farleigh Castle, 2012. Greg snatched it by 100th of a second. Epic!'

These are known in the sport as 'lemonade races' – meaningless in any championship context, just straightforward dashes for victory on the day. I vividly remember, for example, the 1963 Cleveland Grand National up on the sandstone slopes of the North Yorkshire Moors when local stars Dickie Preston and Gordon Blakeway enthralled a huge crowd by running with the visiting BSA and Matchless factory stars, headed by world champ Jeff Smith. I still treasure the hopeless snaps I shot there with my mother's Kodak Brownie!

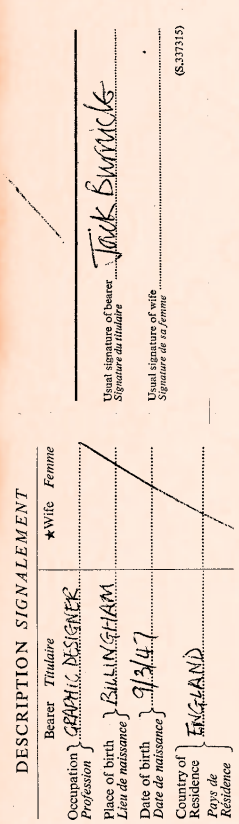
Such heady excitement has embroidered my viewing ever since – throughout the sixties around northern England, then expanding countrywide after I moved to London. At that time 125cc racing was emerging and had become an FIM European series by 1973. In 1974 a British 125 championship duel at Wakes Colne involved young whippersnapper Roger Harvey (Yamaha) beating that cool Gloucestershire stylist, the late Malcolm Davis.

Then 1975 ushered in the British Open Championship and a fabulous four-way season-long battle featuring Vic Allan (Bultaco), Vic Eastwood and John Banks (CCMs) and wild newcomer Graham Noyce (Maico). This series put national 125cc racing temporarily in the shade but the scalding summer of '76 took me abroad to my first continental grand prix at Cassel in northern France and a colossal 125 scrap between Gaston Rahier (Suzuki) and American champ Marty Smith (Honda). The torrid heat, billowing dust clouds and 30,000 fevered fans – plus Harvey's mighty charge to third overall on a Husqvarna – ensured this was a whole new, thrill-packed experience.

The 125s were at it again in 1978, enmeshing Rahier, his team-mate Akira Watanabe and dynamic 20-year-old Dutchman Gerard Rond (Yamaha) in a fantastic three-way feud. Akira eventually triumphed and the following year the 125 circus welcomed his new Suzuki sidekick Harry Everts. By the time they arrived at Mill in Holland on May 13 Everts had won four motos on the trot and Akira badly needed to retaliate. They clashed in the first moto, the drama heightened for me by a running battle I had with one of those vast, beer-bellied Dutch Neanderthals who often operated as flag marshals! My photos were taken while dodging the unpleasant attempts of this oaf to block my view. In retrospect, it only added fuel to the fire of an extraordinary duel...

On a hot, humid day around a gnarly track they traded blows for 40 minutes – often side by side – and Everts was flung momentarily side-saddle at half-distance. Two laps to go and Akira led when Belgian Gilbert de Roover crashed and broke a leg. The yellow flags went out to protect him, Watanabe stayed wide as directed but Harry cut inside the marshals to snatch a controversial win by inches at the chequered flag. Breathtaking stuff right out of a Boy's Own annual...

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A BITCHIN' BATTLE BETWEEN BRAD LACKEY (6) + ANDRE VROMANS IN LUXEMBOURG, DECIDED THE 1982 500 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



BELGIAN DIRK GEUKENS LEADS AMERICAN JEFF STANTON IN DRAMATIC CLOSING STAGES OF 1990 MX DES NATIONS, VIMMERBY, SWEDEN



ARNO DRECHSEL (KTM, 10) BEAT GERT-JAN VAN DOORN (HONDA, 6) AND MARC VELKENEERS (GILERA, 4) IN BLISTERING FIRST MOTO OF 1985 BELGIAN 250 GP AT BORGLOON

The same year also brought the Honda Racing Corporation to the 500 GP forefront with gritty blond Englishman Noyce leading their assault on a Yamaha/Suzuki stronghold. On a truly memorable day at Markelo in the Netherlands a sand-plastered, goggle-less 'Rolls Noyce' clung to the rear fender of Dutch title rival Gerrit Wolsink before pulling an amazing pass on the last lap and victory by a bike's length in a thrilling fight to the finish!

My season ended with an international at Gallefontaine in France. This GP circuit ran steeply up and down a vast chalky hillside and the final moto featured a huge set-to between Bob Wright's CCM and the KTM of Jean-Jacques Bruno who, earlier that season, had become the first Frenchman to win a 500 GP. Amid absolute bedlam 'Foamin' Bob' and Johnny Aubert's uncle 'JJ' bounced off paling fences and each other until, on the final lap, the CCM spun up and slithered wide and Bruno clawed his way past. Afterwards an excited throng of four-stroke loving Frenchies engulfed the CCM awning cheering an embarrassed Bob. Truly a terrific 'lemonade race'!

The 1980s have already gone down in MX folklore as years of gripping grand prix championships in all three classes featuring many coruscating contests, among them awesomely ill-tempered 500 GP confrontations between Andre Malherbe and Brad Lackey and then who could forget Neil Hudson driving from dead last in Holland's fabulous finale to snatch the 1981 world 250 crown?

In 1982 Danny LaPorte and Kees van der Ven went elbow to ferocious elbow at Hawkstone Park before Lackey and Andre Vromans did the same in Luxembourg. Malherbe and Hakan Carlqvist clashed in France and San Marino a year later and Ron Lechien went up against Bob Hannah at Unadilla's US 250 GP in 1984. Belgium's pulsating 1985 250 do at Borgloon saw Arno Drechsel deservedly grab his only grand prix win. Dave Thorpe fought brutal wars with Malherbe, Jobe, Eric Geboers and Leif Persson in 1986 at Hawkstone and a stirring Dutch round back at Markelo and won a fantastic final showdown with Malherbe in Luxembourg. That season also brought Hannah versus Johnny O'Mara in 'The Thriller at Unadilla'. 'The Hurricane' came to Europe 12 months later and ignited Iffendic's French 250GP, then there was a muddy 1989 500 marvel at St Jean d'Angeley when Thorpey squeezed out Jacky Vimond on the last lap and what about that savage title-clinching clash between Thorpe and Geboers at Namur...

And as if GPs alone were not enough, supercross exploded across Europe, attracting America's best. The Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam hosted a breathtaking final between 'Carla' and US champ Mike Bell in 1980 and another epic in '83 before Paris Bercy established itself as the world's outstanding indoor arena.

By the end of the decade Jean-Michel Bayle's heroics had the place in absolute uproar. As a fledgling Eurosport commentator I was later ensconced in the middle of the stands surrounded by frantic fans with just headphone, mic and two TV monitors for protection amid sheer pandemonium, covering one of the best lemonade races of all time as Jeremy McGrath, Doug Henry and Mike LaRocco constantly swapped paint and places. And what about those compelling MX and Trophee des Nations contests including 125 giant-killers Lechien, O'Mara and Bayle, Jeff Stanton felling Dirk Geukens for the title at Vimmerby in 1990 and Stanton pounding through the pack as darkness fell on Valkenswaard to rescue the States in '91 after Bradshaw and Bervoets' frenzied fight for 250 supremacy.

In the nineties grand prix racing shed that factory-fed intensity and Stefan Everts settled into his first phase of dominance but a precociously talented French teenager broke into 125 GPs…

Sebastien Tortelli had won 11 motos with Paul Malin six times second when I travelled with Maler to the 1996 Belgian round at Nismes. Like Watanabe 18 years earlier, Malin desperately needed to break the sequence. They produced one of the most inspirational, explosive and emotional epics of all time, colliding in mid-air as they leapt on to the main straight with Paul thwarting Seb's every assault until mid-way round the final lap when a missed gear finally let the Kawasaki through to grab a dramatic win. Their lap of honour was mightily acclaimed by the vast Belgian crowd who were jumping the ropes to grab the hands of their new-found heroes that unforgettable afternoon!

Within two years Tortelli toppled Everts in an unreal 1998 250 GP decider in Greece that we broadcast live on Eurosport but 1996 had pretty much rounded out my 20 years as a roaming grand prix journo and photographer. Since then I've enjoyed commentating many more races – some of them absolute blinders – so ask me to nominate a single stand-out 'best ever' and I become a quivering Piscean wreck!

Anyway, which one's yours?



Nev Bradshaw and Ray Rowson will renew their battle in MX2 in 2012

PRO GO!

THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS KICK OFF THIS MONTH WITH A SEVEN-ROUND SCHEDULE OF AWESOME RACING GOODNESS...

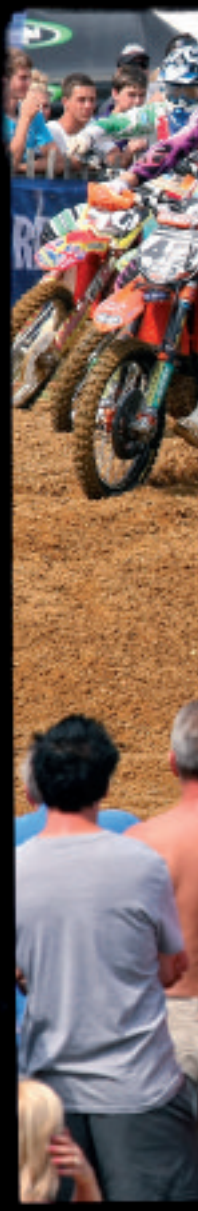
Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty** and **Ian Roxburgh**

Entering its fourth year of action, the Red Bull Pro Nationals has swiftly progressed from the role of motocross newbie to become a genuine contender for the title of Britain's premier MX series.

Of course, that statement's open to debate and critics will point to the handful of UK-based riders who race GPs and will therefore be in Italy on world championship duty when the opening round of the RBPNs kicks off at Landrake on April 28/29. But supporters will cite the quality of tracks the seven-round series will visit in 2012 and the size of the audience each round attracts. And the brilliant bar bangin' racing!

Whatever your view, you can't argue the fact that since 2009 the RBPN has come a long way and is now an established professional series boasting an exciting race format, slick organisation and a fresh, forward-looking approach to promoting the sport to a wider, mainstream family audience.

While the ACU British championship attracts the country's dwindling number of GP teams, Events 22 – the promoter of the RBPNs – makes no attempt to secure these teams' series-long services. Instead it has cultivated a credible championship for those teams that have neither the finances nor the inclination to contest the pay-to-play world championship. >>





Stephen Sword's got his eyes on the prize in MX1 but there's some serious talent signed up so it won't be easy



Mixing MX1 and MX2 classes makes for first corner chaos


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Clever promotion – and, of course, great racing – make the Red Bull Pro Nationals a big favourite with spectators

Add in the three-for-the-price-of-one deal it offers – on top of the Red Bull Pro Nationals each round also features Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and Fuchs-Silkolene Two-Stroke British Championship action – at top-flight venues and it's easy to see why, combined with intelligent promotion, the series always proves so popular with spectators.

The Red Bull Pro Nationals combine both MX1 and MX2 classes in two 25-minute plus two lap races with each class scored separately. This results in some super-exciting racing with surprises coming thick and fast as the top 250F riders regularly get in among the 450F men – proving that MX isn't just about brute horsepower and that even on power-sapping surfaces silky-smooth skills can shave seconds off lap times.

So who are the main movers and shakers this year?

MX1 is packed with talent and even though defending champion Brad Anderson's chosen to spend 2012 Down Under there's no guarantee the hard-charging north easterner would have been a shoo-in to retain his title this time around.

Top of the list of contenders has to be Stephen Sword. The 32-year-old Scot is one of the domestic scene's stand-out stars of the last decade and the GP winner, former MX2 world championship leader and four-time British champion starts as one of at least six highly-favoured riders for big-bike honours.

"Obviously, my goal is to win it," says Stevie who's never one to mince his words. "It won't be easy as there are some top guys racing but being consistent is the key. It's a title I want and I'm looking forward to the first round at Landrake – it's a track I really like."

For 2012 Swordy is armed with an RMZ450 Tyco Suzuki by TAS and the Irish team, famed for their fiercely competitive nature, will be doing all they can to put their man on top of the box as many times as possible during the season.

Swordy's certainly got the pedigree to win but he's not the only grand prix winner racing in MX1 this season with Dutchman Marc de Reuver, Estonian Gert Krestinov and Frenchman Nico Aubin all signed up for the full series. Of the trio it's de Reuver who's more of an established name but he can also be inconsistent and he'll need to be in contention at all seven rounds if he's going to take the title for Lanes Kawasaki.

Buildbase Honda's Aubin has started the season carrying an injury from a practice crash so we've yet to see his true colours but Krestinov – mentored by chief DBR MX tester Rad Ed Bradley – is looking bang on form and will be hoping to snatch an early advantage at the opening round. Gert, who signed to race Route 77 MVR-D Honda in the close season, finished last year's series third in the points table and with Ando absent the only man above him in action this year will be LPE Kawasaki's Marty Barr.

The Ulsterman, MX2 champ in >>



WILDCARDS!

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR...

It's by no means a done deal but the list of potential wildcards reads like a who's who of world motocross. Tommy Searle popped up at Hawkstone last season to dominate and he's not ruled out a return this year and thanks to the tie-in with Red Bull the entire KTM factory team led by Tony Cairoli and Jeffrey Herlings could very well appear at some stage. Jake Nicholls is another firm British favourite tipped to take up a wildcard ride as are former British champs Gordon Crockard and Evgeny Bobryshev as well as GP winners Kevin Strijbos, Seb Pourcel and Rui Goncalves.

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DATES AND VENUES

ROUND ONE – LANDRAKE MOTO PARC, APRIL 28/29

The jewel of the South West, Landrake is hilly, rutty, tough and one of Britain's most spectator-friendly venues.

Set your sat-nav to ***PL12 5EP***

ROUND TWO – FATCAT MOTOPARC, JUNE 2/3

Deep sand makes for conditions that sort the men from the boys – especially in those all-important final motos when it cuts up real rough.

Set your sat-nav to ***DN3 3EH***

ROUND THREE – CANADA HEIGHTS, JULY 7/8

One of the UK's most historic top-flight venues, changes in elevation and a sandy, stony surface pushes riders and machines to the limit.

Set your sat-nav to ***BR8 8DX***

ROUND FOUR – DUNS, JULY 21/22

Laying claim to the title of Scotland's premier track, Duns offers great viewing and the mother of all uphill step-up jumps that's more suited to the Highlands than its location in the Borders.

Set your sat-nav to ***TD11 3NS***

ROUND FIVE – SKELDERS BANK, AUGUST 11/12

Over-looking the historic town of Whitby where Dracula is supposed to have come ashore, lots of big jumps and technical sections get the blood pumping.

Set your sat-nav to ***Y021 1TN***

ROUND SIX – HAWKSTONE PARK, AUGUST 25/26

The granddaddy of UK tracks, Hawkstone's famous hill and deep, energy-sapping sand has been home to some of the finest races ever on this 'ere island…

Set your sat-nav to ***SY4 4NA***

ROUND SEVEN – CULHAM PARK, SEPTEMBER 22/23

Winding up, down and around a steep bank by the side of the River Thames, Culham combines natural gradient changes with man-made features to make for spectacular racing.

Set your sat-nav to ***OX14 3DA***



Irish ace Stuey Edmonds will go well in MX2



Dutch favourite Marc de Reuver is just one of the GP winners contesting the series

2010, took a hugely popular double win from Ando when the series visited his home track of Desertmartin last season. There's no return to Northern Ireland this year but Marty – Kawasaki UK's official #1 pilot – doesn't necessarily need home advantage to win races and will be a real threat to go one better and lift the title in 2012.

So that's five genuine contenders – and we're not finished yet! Gert's team-mate Jason Dougan is another former GP guy who's quick enough to win if he can stay healthy all year and so can Kristian Whatley if he can gel with the PAR Honda. Then there's Lewis Gregory who's blazing the comeback trail with Apico Suzuki, super-privateer Jamie Law on the D3 KTM, Oakleaf Kawasaki's Alex Snow and Samsung Yamaha's former super schoolie Jake Shipton.

It's also wide open down in MX where 2011 champ Elliott Banks-Browne will not be back to defend his crown and on paper it promises to be a cracking clash between the likes of Neville Bradshaw, Bryan MacKenzie, Graeme Irwin and Jordan Booker with a long queue of seriously swift wannabes waiting to grab their chance to stage an upset.

Nev, the newly-crowned British SX Lites champ, of course won the inaugural RBPN MX2 title back in 2009 and now reunited with star engine-tuner Matt Hutchins on the super-fast Evo-Tech Stevens Honda is aiming to repeat his triumph of three seasons ago.

"I want to win the Red Bull championship again," says the South African MXdN team regular. "I'm definitely still getting stronger – this last off-season's proved that – and Matt reckons I'm riding the best I've ever ridden."

Injuries have been a thorn in Nev's side over recent seasons – something Samsung Yamaha's wild-riding Graeme Irwin can identify with. After a year struggling in MX1 on a 350 the young Irishman is back in MX2 where he reckons he should be and if team boss Roy Emberson can bring the best out of Graeme – as he did last season with Kristian Whatley – then the MX2 title could very well be heading back to Ireland for the second time in four years.

Another Irish contender is Stuart Edmonds who has ended his long association with TM to race alongside Swordy on the Tyco Suzuki by TAS team. Stuey, who threatened throughout 2011 in the Fuchs-Silkolene two-stroke series, also finished the year fifth in MX2. Ending the 2011 season two spots higher and claiming series bronze, MotoOne Rockstar KTM's IrnBry MacKenzie was the best-placed of this year's returning talent and if hard work and desire alone are enough he'll be a hard man to beat this time around.

>>

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Can Martin Barr go one better in 2012?



Former champ Neville Bradshaw wants his title back

After leaving HM Plant KTM UK at the end of 2011, Jordan Booker's got former world champ David Thorpe in his corner this year on the Buildbase Honda team and he's got to fancy his chances but so too must Embo's new French signing Steven Lenoir who's already shown a terrific turn of speed this season. Former Embo rider Ray Rowson is also in with a shout although the LPE Kawasaki man doesn't seem to be at his best on a 250F and there's a possible wildcard winner in last year's Fuchs-Silkolene 125cc Expert champ Luke Remmer who's stepping it up for 2012.

The MX2 division is the breeding ground for young talent and the list of youngsters aiming to make 2012 their breakthrough year is long so expect some fresh faces on the podium and possibly even an appearance on the box from PAR Honda Red Bull's Nathan Watson, last year's runaway Rookies winner.

For a full Red Bull Elite Youth Cup preview turn to ***pages 130-131*** *and for more series information point your PC towards* ***www.redbullpronationals.com***



Matty Moffat's back to defend his Expert Open two-stroke title



Buildbase Honda hopeful Jordan Booker



TWO-SMOKERS!

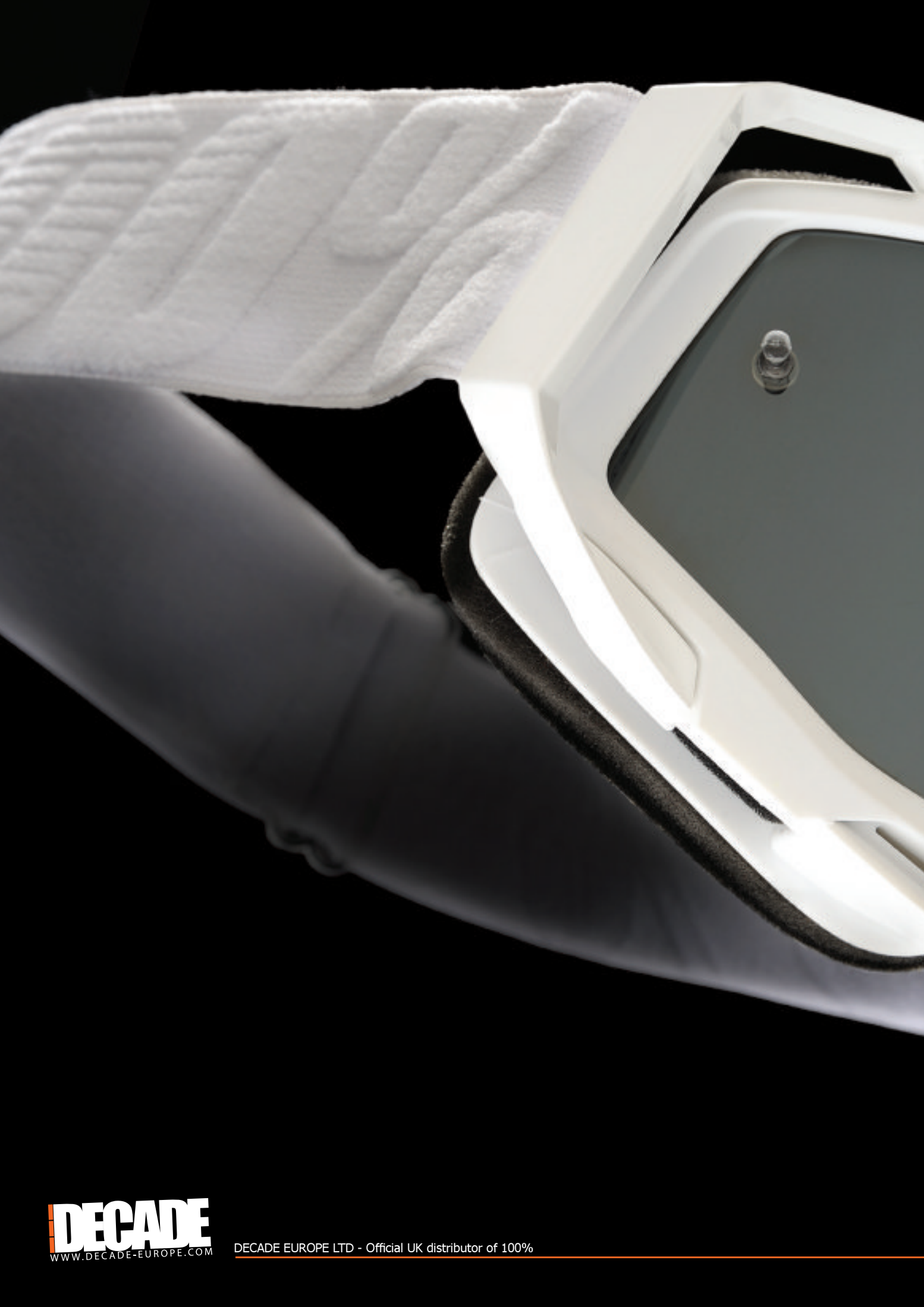
FUCHS-SILKOLENE TWO-STROKES

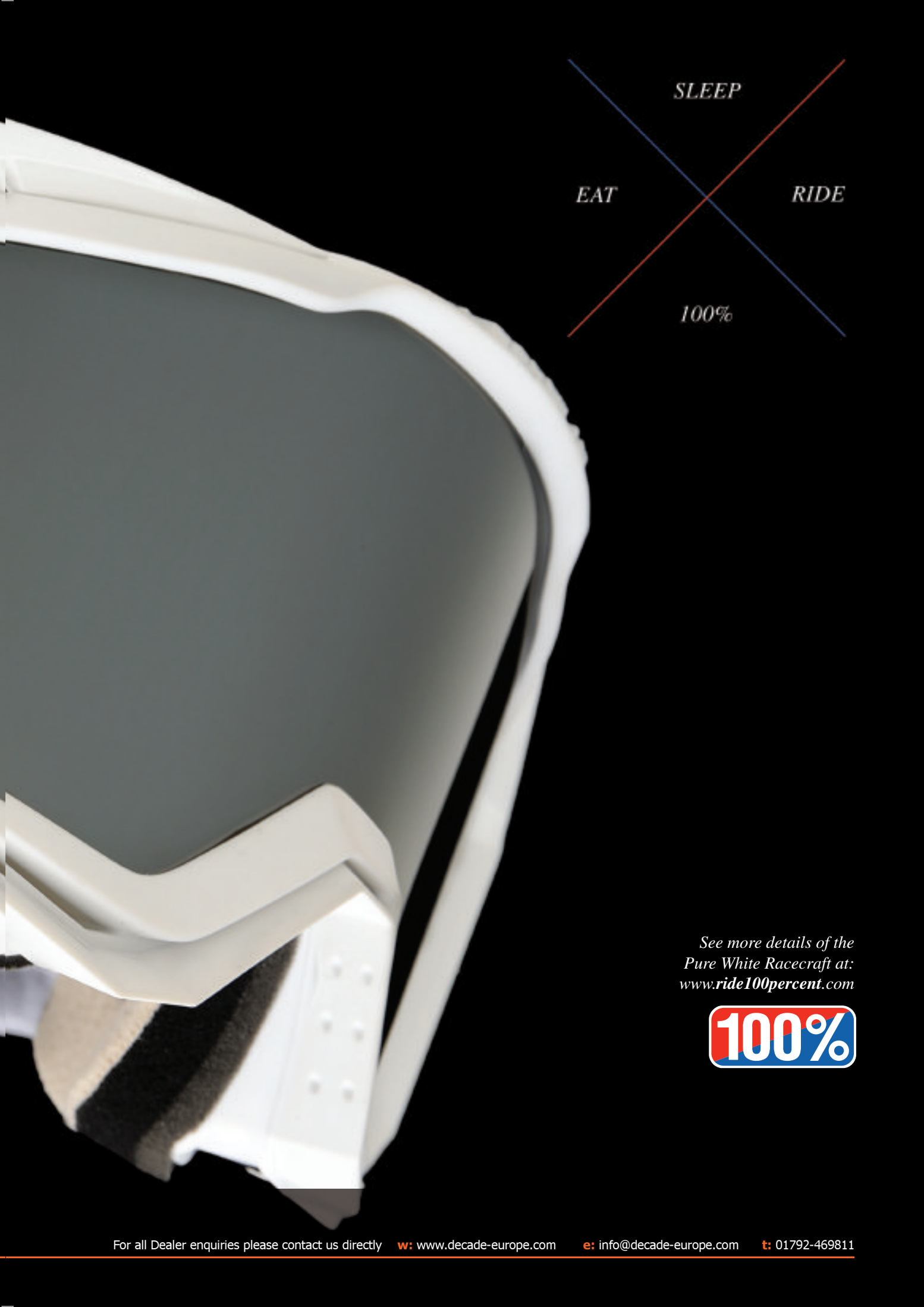
If you like your MX to include a pre-mix fix then there are four classes of two-strokes – that's 125 and Open Experts and Juniors – battling it out at each round.

Last year's 125cc Expert class went down to a thrilling last-round duel at Culham which was won by Luke Remmer after Jon Pettitt crashed in the final race. This time around Luke's moved on to the Pro MX2 ranks and former GP rider Jon's still to sign up but with seasoned Scouse smoker specialist Danny Tollet in the mix and Jim Davies back after sitting out the last three rounds of 2011 there's guaranteed to be some eighth-litre bar bangin'.

The Expert Open class sees defending champ Matty Moffat back aiming to retain his title but there's bound to be some stiff opposition from among others Carlton Husband and James Dunn.

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Despite struggling in his debut GP season Jordi Tixier did enough to impress KTM's Pit Bierer and Stefan Everts

JT RACING!

HE'S FAST, HE'S FRENCH AND HE'D LIKE TO RACE AMA SX. SOUND FAMILIAR? WELL JORDI TIXIER'S FOLLOWING A PROVEN CAREER PATH HAVING SIGNED UP WITH THE RED BULL KTM FACTORY TEAM...

Words and photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

After Jake Nicholls failed to find his way onto the factory KTM team for 2012 there were a few raised eyebrows when Mattighofen announced who'd got the ride ahead of The Reverend.

Jordi Tixier had hardly set the world on fire in his debut world championship season but the skinny Frenchman was apparently already on the Austrian factory's wish list before the 2011 campaign had even spun a wheel. A stand-out debut season in 2010 with Jacky Martens' Nestaan JM Racing KTM team had seen him win the FIM 125 World Junior title and EMX 125 crown plus the '09 Junior Cup at the Bercy SX and it was these results that got him on the Everts/Beirer radar.

That wasn't his first taste of international success. In '07 he'd finished third in the 85cc FIM World Junior Championship behind two of the fastest kids of the time – Ken Roczen and Max Anstie. After moving up to a 125 the steep learning curve resulted in a mixture of crashes and broken bones before Martens, the '93 world 500cc champion, stepped in at the end of 2009.

Nicknamed 'Bobby' by his fellow riders, the 21-year-old starts the GP season alongside Jeffrey Herlings and Jeremy Van Horebeek in the team that's expected to produce the next world MX2 champion. We caught up with him in France to see how he's enjoying life as a factory pilot…

DBR: Tell us about your early years – you started on a KTM also...
JT: "My first ever race was on a KTM 50cc and I was six years old. In 2003 I was French 65cc champion and in '07 I was French supercross champion and third in the FIM Junior World Championship in Bulgaria, always on a KTM. When it was time to move to the bigger bikes I wasn't getting support from KTM France so I had to go green…"

DBR: That's when you moved to the Kawasaki SMPI/BUD racing team…
JT: "I started in 2008 with SMPI and they were a very good sponsor for me – I rode in the French and Elite motocross championships and in supercross for their team. It was great for me at the time, I'll always thank them for that opportunity."

DBR: You had some terrible crashes – mostly racing SX. Can you bear to talk about them?
JT: "I broke both my wrists on one occasion when I landed short on the 85cc but I have the worst memories from when I was leading the 125 French SX junior championship in 2008. I was leading the penultimate race of the series when I crashed and broke my collarbone for the second time after landing on another rider. And in 2010, after I got the EMX125 title, the KTM factory invited me to ride Herlings' bike at the GP in Fermo and I broke my hand the week before going to Italy. I don't crash that often but when I do it's usual to break some bones!" **>>**

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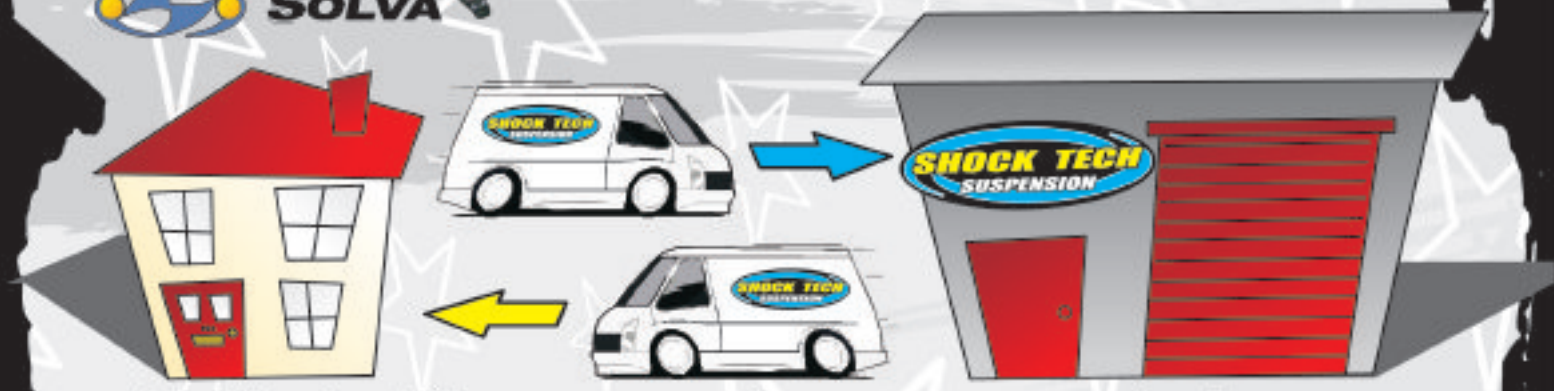




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DBR: You then came back to the KTMs. How did that come about?
JT: "I was just finishing two seasons with many injuries in 2009 and me and my parents weren't really sure what to do for the following year so that's when one of my best sponsors, Shot race gear, got in touch with the Nestaan JM Racing KTM team. After trying the bike I found that the opportunity to do the EMX 125 with Jacky Martens was just unmissable – being able to be on a 'semi-factory' team with 125 factory-prepared engines was amazing."

DBR: How was the change for you?
JT: "It was good. Jacky is great. For the first year I worked mostly with my father as the weather in Belgium wasn't good and everything was frozen but having my French mechanic with me and practising with my father was perfect."

DBR: Have your skills in the sand improved after your time in Belgium?
JT: "Not much at the time as I didn't really know on what I should be specifically improving. With Stefan looking at my riding now and giving me feedback and directions on what I should change I feel that I'm a better sand rider although I know I still have a lot to work on, I just need to keep that speed to stay on the top."

DBR: Were you expecting to win your EMX 125 title back in 2010?
JT: "That was a surprise for me actually. After so many injuries on the Kawasaki during the two previous years I didn't know what to expect. I just know that I was very motivated to be on a team like Jacky's and I worked a lot with my father to prepare for the season so that when I got to the first race of the season in Mantova I won both motos – and that was sand! Apart from St Jean d'Angely I didn't know any of those tracks. Winning so many motos – it was almost a perfect season!"

DBR: And being a Junior world champ, winning right at home in Gueugnon – how was it?
JT: "It was incredible! It's only one race with two heats so there's a whole lot of pressure. After fighting all the weekend with Savatgy it was so good when I finished the last moto, what a relief! That tasted so good!"

DBR: And how was the experience of riding the MX2 class last year? I bet you were surprised with the 40-minute motos?
JT: "Yes, those 10 minutes more can wear you down! I practised a lot during the winter having that in mind and at my third GP in Glen Helen I was 10th which made me realise that I had the speed to give it a shot for the top 10. I then had some up-and-down results with good races and crashes in the same weekend but that only helped me to learn more for this season." >>



Jordi is being tutored by the master

SECOND OPINION...

STEFAN EVERTS

"Jordi won the EMX2 title with Jacky Martens two years ago and we at KTM Austria said at the time that we cannot lose him so we supported him last year to do the MX2 with Jacky again – it was a step taken by KTM and not Jacky's team. He didn't do that great in his first MX2 season and one cannot expect too much but we gave him another chance. So far we have been working hard and he's been listening. It's been good to work with him. I hope to see him doing some top seven or eight and by the end of the year maybe in the first five."



After two tough years with Kawasaki learning the ropes on a big bike the move back to KTM worked wonders for the young Frenchman

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Engine	4 stroke DOHC, 4 valve Sherco technology	4 stroke DOHC, 4 valve Sherco technology
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Bore x Stroke	78 x 52,2 mm	84 x 52,25 mm
Fuel System	Magnetti Marelli digital electronic fuel injection	Magnetti Marelli digital electronic fuel injection
Cooling	Liquid system with forced circulation	Liquid system with forced circulation
Starting	Unique electric starting system	Unique electric starting system
Battery	12 V / 7Ah	12 V / 7Ah
Exhaust	Stainless steel header pipe, aluminium muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds.	Stainless steel header pipe, aluminum muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds.
Transmission	6 speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive	6 speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive
Clutch	Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath	Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath
Ignition	Ducati alternator 150 W	Ducati alternator 150 W
Chassis	Half perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum	Half perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum
Fuel Tank	8.5 Litre fuel tank	8.5 Litre fuel tank
Brakes	Hydraulically activated Brembo **i**: Ø 270 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear) **iR**: Ø 260 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear)	Hydraulically activated Brembo **i**: Ø 270 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear) **iR**: Ø 260 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear)
Front suspension	Ø48 mm tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm of travel **i**: SACHS "OR" telescopic fork **iR**: WP telescopic fork	Ø48 mm tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm of travel **i**: SACHS «OR» telescopic fork **iR**: WP telescopic fork
Rear suspension	WP progressive, multiadjustable rear shock utilizing a linkage and rod system 320 mm of travel	WP progressive, multiadjustable rear shock utilizing a linkage and rod system 320 mm of travel
Front wheel	Excel 1.60 x 21" aluminum rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type	Excel 1.60 x 21" aluminum rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type
Rear wheel	Excel 2.15 x 18" aluminum rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type	Excel 2.15 x 18" aluminum rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type
Weight	102 kg (225 lbs.)	102 kg (225 lbs.)
Wheelbase	1.480 mm (58.27 in)	1.480 mm (58.27 in)
Ground clearance	350 mm (13.78 in)	1.480 mm (58.27 in)
Seat height	870 mm (34.25 in)	870 mm (34.25 in)
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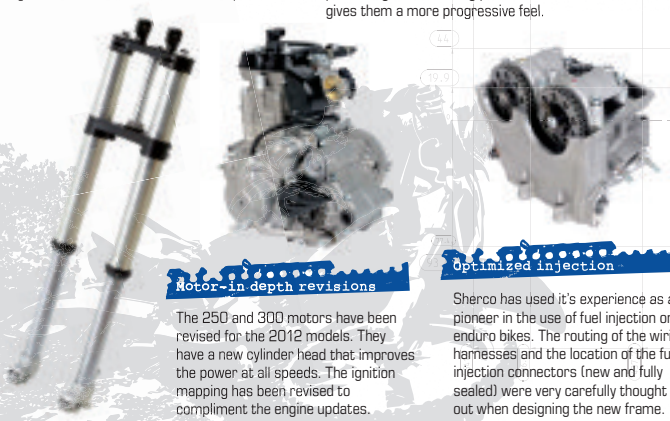
WP fork

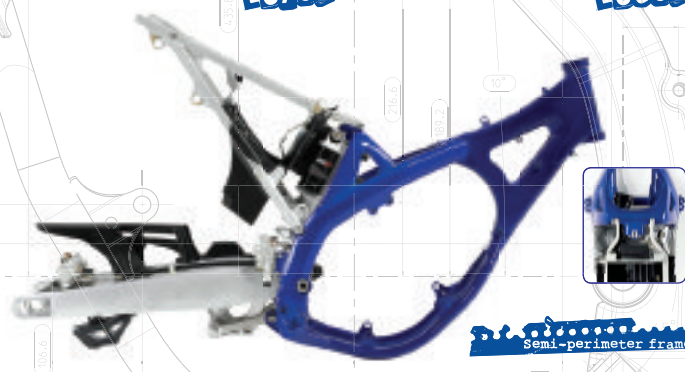
The 48 mm diameter fork that is fitted to the R series was developed by WP in conjunction with the Sherco factory. It provides outstanding control on large impacts while maintaining a great level of comfort on small bumps.

Brembo brakes

The renowned Brembo brand makes its appearance on the 2012 Sherco. This has led to an improvement in the feeling of the clutch and brake systems and provides gains in braking power and gives them a more progressive feel.







Semi-perimeter frame

Sherco frames are famous for their excellent adaptation to the practice of enduro racing in all conditions. There is a big revolution in 2012, the enduro models are receiving a totally new, semi-perimeter frame made from chrome molybdenum. This new design was chosen after extensive testing in the enduro environment and proven to provide excellent performance in this discipline. The shape and thickness of the various frame components varies depending upon the constraints and loads applied to them. This results in high lateral stiffness (for more precise handling, better control in the corners) without increasing the longitudinal stiffness (providing excellent comfort and a neutral feeling in all circumstances). This new configuration allows a clearer focus on the rest of the components, the swing arm, the exhaust and the fuel tank have been redesigned to enhance the total feeling of the bike. The 2012 Sherco becomes sharper and more accurate, while keeping the tracking and feel of the front end that has made its reputation.

Motor-in depth revisions

The 250 and 300 motors have been revised for the 2012 models. They have a new cylinder head that improves the power at all speeds. The ignition mapping has been revised to compliment the engine updates.

Optimized injection

Sherco has used it's experience as a pioneer in the use of fuel injection on enduro bikes. The routing of the wiring harnesses and the location of the fuel injection connectors (new and fully sealed) were very carefully thought out when designing the new frame.

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DBR: What were your biggest mistakes last year?
JT: "When I got in my head that I had the speed to be in the top 10 at the beginning of the season that just killed me with pressure instantly – big mistake! I should have never thought about it. Towards the end of the season I kind of let myself go, relaxed a bit more thinking that I would finish wherever I finished and things got better again. I even had a really exciting race with Roczen in Fermo – okay, he was on a two-stroke 125cc – but it felt good again. That was my best race of the season."

DBR: So when did you get 'the call' from the factory?
JT: "It was in Loket when Pit and Stefan asked me to meet them at the Red Bull hospitality. I just thought about what would they want and my heart started beating a bit faster! They slowly explained everything about this year and we found a good deal. When I saw the contract to sign I was in heaven!"

DBR: This is the top team in MX2 – feeling a bit nervous?
JT: "I want to do the best this year so I can continue for the next one and that's my goal. I have to take things step-by-step otherwise I'll do the same mistakes as last year. They don't give me any pressure here – the plan is as always good starts, do my best and we'll see the results at the end."

DBR: I bet your secret goal would have to be a podium…
JT: "No, that's crazy! There's Jeffrey, Searle and many others out there – if I get a top five it would be incredible so a podium would only be possible with some riders crashing. Who knows? Luck also plays a part in this game..."

DBR: How do the bike and team feel compared with last year?
JT: "I already had a really good bike last year – it was Marvin Musquin's 2010 factory engine so if I think about it I could win a GP with that bike! The difference is in the team and the staff that accompany me – always there to help. In Jacky's team I felt a bit more by myself. I just had my mechanic and my parents, Jacky was there but didn't speak much. With the factory team everyone keeps asking me about stuff about the bike after the race. This makes a big difference and brings me confidence in my job."

DBR: You must spend hours in the gym and on the bike during the week…
JT: "Not that much. I have Yannig Kervella doing my physical training programme and then there's Stefan for the bike practice. I do many 40-minute motos every day to get the necessary endurance and in Belgium that means in sand."

DBR: Which rider do you try and use as a role model?
JT: "Marvin Musquin. I like his style and he's always very nice to me. Being already MX2 world champion twice means that he has a lot of talent and it's a shame that he's been injured after he went to the US. I think that if he doesn't get any injuries and comes back stronger then he can win there."

DBR: Are you also going to leave us and go to the US to race SX like all French kids seem to do?
JT: "Absolutely, why not? I would like to be at the top here first obviously, I'm working for that! And you can always dream! I like it there. When we went last year to Glen Helen I went a week before and practised with Marvin in Milestone and everything was so good – the track, the weather. Perfect to get in the right fitness."



Jordi won the 2010 EMX125cc title



Going bar-to-bar with his new team-mates in Mantova





Despite almost 20 years as a professional racer under his belt, Kevin Windham still has what it takes to make the podium



SPECIAL K!

KEVIN 'K-DUB' WINDHAM IS 34 – WHICH IN MX YEARS MUST MAKE HIM ABOUT 90 – BUT, HE TELLS OUR US EDITOR, AS LONG AS HE'S COMPETITIVE WHY SHOULD HE RETIRE?

GEICO Honda's Kevin Windham has won at every level of professional motocross and supercross racing in the USA and he's taken on the likes of Jeremy McGrath, Ricky Carmichael, Chad Reed and James Stewart in the primes of their careers.

Now fully 34 years old – something like 90 years old in motocross years – Windham has been through just about all you can imagine in an active racer. He came into the pros at 16 years of age making more money than he could've ever dreamed of and he remains the only full-time 125cc (Lites/MX2) racer to win a 250cc (450/MX1) SX Main Event. And before his mid 20s he had already partied too much and retired following a broken femur suffered when he lost a bet to then team-mate Travis Pastrana to try a huge jump in practice at a supercross race.

At the time he was the typical unhappy young motocross racer. He had ridden motorcycles full-time since he was three years old, he was burnt out and had yet to come to terms with the fame and pressure of being a professional athlete at the top level of his sport.

That was a decade ago. He returned to racing just over a year later and has been basically wide-open ever since. Now the elder statesman of motocross, Windham is among the most respected, smartest, most highly skilled athletes in the history of two-wheeled motorsports. And he's still one of the fastest guys in the game…

DBR: Tell us about Kevin Windham. He's old but crafty...
KW: "I thought I was 35 but I'm only 34..."

DBR: You're so old you forgot how old you are!
KW "[Laughs] I thought I was 35! I was telling someone I'm 35 the other day and I was being for real and I was like 'wait, hold on...'"

DBR: How has racing changed for you in your – and pardon me for saying it – 'old age'?
KW: "It's honestly just about doing whatever exercises I feel like I can do. There are things that I can't do anymore. And I know that 34's not that old but I think it's more just the cumulative crashes, training, casing, injuries – all those things."

DBR: So it's not the years, it's the mileage...
KW: "Yes, it's definitely the mileage. There are guys who can do far more at an older age but for me I do what I can. I avoid the stuff that hurts. Luckily, after 18 seasons as a professional and now 31 years on a motorcycle when I throw a leg over the bike it's really about muscle memory. I'm not able to be good at other things but when I get on a bike I'm like 'okay, I remember this'. And I honestly don't have to train as hard as I used to. That's good for me. I'm happy about that and I just do what I can to stay competitive. When I'm not competitive, that's going to be time to step away but right now I still feel like I can be."

DBR: Just prior to this interview being conducted, at the Toronto Supercross you put yourself on top of the practice charts for qualifying times so obviously you're still really fast. You were even close to the front every week when the field was deeper than it is now.
KW: "The season was frustrating to start with. There were so many guys early on that you could fall off the board if you were only about a half-second off of the leader. You build a lot of confidence from being on the board and you could literally be off of the leader's pace by no more than one half of a second and barely be in the top 10.

"It was really, really tight at the beginning of the season and it's still tight now. There are still guys that are going really fast. Yeah, it would be tougher with more guys but you can't use that as an excuse to discredit the guys that are out there. I think there is still an extreme amount of talent on the track. It's just tough right now. I think a lot of guys have found ways to shrink that gap between the best and the mediocre riders. I think everybody's really tightening up.

"It's a dog-eat-dog world out there on the track in the big-bike class right now for sure. You just dread going to the LCQs. Even last week, where I had to go into the LCQ from the outside gate, it's just a bad place to be so luckily we made it in. It's a tough class. I think next year it's going to be tougher."

Steve Cox is a Glock-packin', raccoon-shootin', gung-ho American MX journo – think Hunter S Thompson with a moto-habit – who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from defunct US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

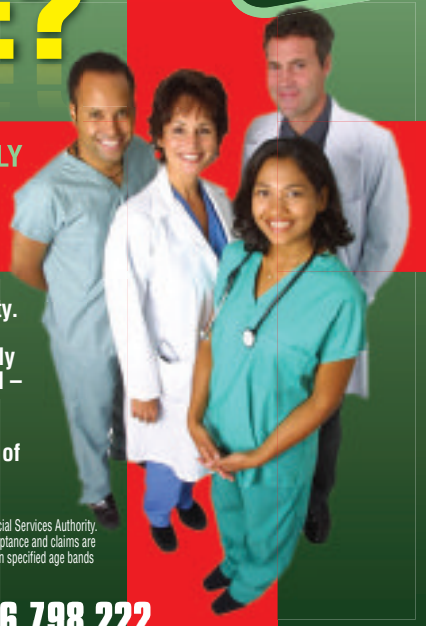
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DBR: You said before that you would love to be a pro for 20 years because it's a nice, round number plus that would take you through 2014 and obviously 14 is a significant number for you as well...
KW: "Yeah and I'm signed here on the GEICO Honda team through 2014..."

DBR: And then are you done? Do you know that for sure?
KW: "Well, I think as much fun as we can have with numbers it being 14 to match my bike and it being my 20th year and all that... It's all really kind of cool stuff but at the end of the day it's just a number and I don't really know that it's worth a whole bunch. I've talked to [GEICO Honda team manager] Mike [LaRocco] a lot about him being the rider that's done the most races ever and even to him it's just a number. So, if I'm where I would hope to be at that time – up front – then I may have a real tough decision to make about stepping away. I would be more likely to stick around because right now it's a job that's – I hate to say it – kind of easy. I've just done it for so long. It's just what I'm used to. There are downsides to this job but I'm so used to them and there are tons of upsides and I'm kind of used to them, too. It's a good high right now for me."

DBR: You've had a lot of ups and downs in your racing career…
KW: "I have had tough times. How could you not? You turn 16, you turn pro and you're making – at the time – six-figure income. It was something that I was prepared to ride a motorcycle for but that was about it. There was absolutely nothing else about the job that I was prepared for. I've been through significant, life-altering changes – both physically and mentally. I'm just able to look through clearer eyes now. Obviously, you still make mistakes – we're all human – but it's just easier to get this job done."

DBR: The perception is that you're the epitome of 'natural talent' while guys like Ricky Carmichael – everyone says he's just a hard worker as if he has no talent...
KW: "[Laughs] Ricky was the pudgiest little kid that hauled butt on a 50, a 60, an 80, a 125, a 250..."

DBR: Exactly! He won Nationals in 2000 on a 250 and he was flat-out fat...
KW: "Right! So, the point is he took that and brought it to another level which made him the GOAT. MC, he was the same way. It wasn't like those guys weren't working out or that I wasn't working out. Maybe my programme was different from theirs. I couldn't have done what RC did, working that hard off the bike. A lot of these guys come in and they work to the point where it's almost like a love/hate relationship where they love it when they're out racing but they hate it every other bit of the time. I don't really hate any part of it. I probably could have done it a little different. I could've worked harder off the bike but I wouldn't be here today if I did."







K-Dub's survived a young and unhappy stage to become an elder statesman



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Windham's role in SX opening ceremonies has cemented his star status

DBR: You'd be burnt out...
KW: "I'd be way burnt out. In my prime I was close. I got put up against two of the toughest guys ever in McGrath and Carmichael. So I finished second a lot to those guys and ultimately wound up being the winningest rider to not win a championship..."

DBR: You've said that racing is kind of routine and the transfers in the dark and all that in the opening ceremony, they fire you up for racing...
KW: "Anyone who has ever ridden dirt bikes understands that feeling. It's like test running a jump. You know as soon as you make the corner to go to a jump whether you're going to do it or not. Once you commit and you're all in..."

DBR: What is your actual racing goal now? Just to be competitive? What is it?
KW: "I think right now my goal is to kind of stay competitive and be able to come to the races and rest. Coming to the races is rest."

DBR: Rest from family life and stuff?
KW: "Don't say from family life..."

DBR: You have four kids so I'm just saying it has to get hectic sometimes...
KW: "It's funny because whenever I don't do Nationals people tend to call on me because they're like 'K-Dub's not racing, we can ask him for this, ask him for that'. But it's like when you're racing no-one wants to ask you for anything. They're like 'he's focused, he's just busy'. It's gotten to where Dotty [his wife] and I have been working heavily a couple days a week in the health clubs [Planet Fitness where Windham owns a lot of different franchise locations] and juggling that around and still have four kids who are growing up and starting to do their own things, playing basketball and stuff. So you're running here and there. But when you go to the race everything is planned for you. Everything is regimented. You're going here, here, doing this, doing that..."

DBR: Right. Not a lot of emergencies.
KW "It's just fun. It's just easy and fun. But I don't want to milk it so long. And there have been riders who have done that. I don't think that would be a good way to justify a career. I mean, if I'm on top of the board like I was today in practice that kind of validates me being here. For me to go to the end of the night saying I held my own, I was good enough and smart enough and all that, that would make it worth it to me."

DBR: And you also haven't hit the ground a ton in your time so maybe you'll walk around without as many aches and pains as you could've had if you weren't so smooth...
KW: "You know, I say that and then whenever I go to a chiropractor or something they want me to list broken bones and I start listing them and I'm like 'I'm one of the more injury-free riders out of everybody that's here but the list is long'. It's a tough life but it's very rewarding."

YAWNING GLORY!

FROM DOOZIE TO SNOOZIE – VILLOPOTO'S RUNNING AWAY WITH THE SUPERCROSS TITLE AS BARCIA CONTINUES TO DOMINATE DOWN IN THE LITES...

When you're as good as Ryan Villopoto you can control championships without any help from your competition. But when your competition co-operates and leaves you more or less alone at the top of the supercross championship the battle for the title can get really boring, really fast.

And it's not much fun in the Lites East either where Justin Barcia's dominating but without the exciting prospect of putting in a perfect season…

450

St Louis' Edward Jones Dome was where Ryan Villopoto's 2010 season came to a sudden end when he went over the bars and broke his right leg, stopping him not only from contending for the 2010 Supercross title but also from competing outdoors at all. Obviously, 2011 turned around for Villopoto as he snared both 450cc titles, each for the first time in his career.

The St Louis round is earlier in the season this year – round nine – and Villopoto comes into the event having won three of the previous four Main Events and having finished off the podium just once – a fourth place in Los Angeles – all year.

JGR/Toyota Yamaha's Davi Millsaps grabs the Main Event holeshot and leads the pack around for the first couple of laps while Villopoto starts inside the top three behind Justin Brayton. Villopoto quickly goes by Brayton and sets to work on Millsaps. It takes him two laps before he secures the race lead and from there he begins to pull away.

However, with six laps to go Red Bull KTM's Ryan Dungey moves into second spot and begins catching Villopoto – despite what we would later learn was a fractured collarbone for Dungey. Dungey catches Villopoto relatively quickly but runs out of time. So Villopoto takes his fourth win in the last five rounds and his fifth of the year, extending his points lead over Dungey to 13 points as the series heads to Daytona International Speedway.

This ends up not really mattering though as between St Louis and Daytona, Dungey realises he needs to get his collarbone operated on and he bows out of the championship, hoping to show back up later and maybe score some more race wins for KTM.

Villopoto goes into Daytona with the confidence of knowing he has won the event two years in a row now but the 2012 Daytona Supercross starts out with a torrential downpour during the heat races and by the time the Main Events roll around the track isn't just muddy but so wet that racers are forced to splash through many areas of the track.



A few years ago Officer James Stewart took most of the pack down in the first corner of a Daytona mudder – this time around it's a much happier hunting ground

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Brett Metcalfe breaks out the Suzuki jetski for Daytona



Cole Seely gets on the gas in St Louis



RV leads Justin Brayton – the defending champ is dominating in 2012

At the start of the 450cc Main Event Millsaps takes another holeshot, just in front of his team-mate and former champion James Stewart. Then comes heat race winner Kevin Windham (a winner at another muddy Daytona event in 2008), Frenchman Marvin Musquin, Aussie Brett Metcalfe and the rest of the field. Villopoto is near the back and gets caught up with a slower rider and falls in the mud. He rounds the first lap in 17th.

Out front it takes a couple of laps before Stewart finds his way by his team-mate and into the lead but once he does he takes control, leading the rest of the race over Millsaps and Windham. Villopoto ends up fifth and his chief competitor in the title chase at this point, James Stewart, makes up valuable ground in the championship chase with his Daytona win.

But in Indianapolis the wheels come off for Stewart as well. Stewart goes down in his heat race and suffers a head injury, knocking him out for at least the night in Indy and the following weekend in Toronto.

In the Indy 450cc Main Event Villopoto shows once again that he's the class of the field, grabbing the lead late in the race from Justin Brayton to take yet another SX win. Brayton grabs second over Millsaps. Then in Toronto Brayton grabs the early lead yet again but Villopoto is quickly all over him and passes Brayton for his seventh win of the season. At the finish Villopoto leads Brayton, Windham, Millsaps and Jake Weimer.

Villopoto now holds a 79-point lead over Ryan Dungey who is still out injured. Next up in the points is James Stewart who is fully 94 points behind. Ryan Villopoto can clinch his second consecutive Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship as early as this coming weekend in Houston, Texas, if he wins and James Stewart finishes fourth or worse.



Even with a fractured collarbone Ryan Dungey's good for second in St Louis

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A slip-up in Indy is the only blot on Justin Barcia's near perfect record so far this season

250

GEICO Honda's Justin Barcia has been plainly dominant in the Lites East and it continues in St Louis. In the Main Event the points leader grabs the holeshot and just flat-out smokes the Lites field, taking the win over German Ken Roczen (in his best finish of the season) and Rockstar Energy Suzuki's Blake Wharton.

In Daytona Beach the weather looks to be Barcia's biggest competitor and if his winning streak will end it seems likely that it will be in the Daytona mud. But Barcia grabs the holeshot to start the Main Event while Baggett quickly slots into second in front of Blake Wharton, Alex Martin, Roczen, Jake Canada and Darryn Durham.

Barcia pulls away initially but Baggett begins catching him before halfway, only to fall with five laps still to run in the 12-lap race. It looks like the race for the lead is over but, miraculously, Baggett reels Barcia back in from well over 10 seconds back and on the final lap is looking for a way past Barcia. However, Barcia keeps smart lines and holds Baggett behind him in the Daytona slop. Third goes to Baggett's PC team-mate Durham.

Talk of Barcia's perfect season starts picking up momentum in Indy but a poor start in the Main Event doesn't help his cause. Baggett takes the lead over Roczen but the race is red-flagged for downed rider Kyle Cunningham.

The race is restarted with a never-before-used single-file restart and Roczen pulls back into the lead, only to go down on his own a lap later and hand the lead to Wharton with Durham second, Barcia third, and Baggett fourth. That's how they finish with Wharton taking the win over Durham, Barcia and Baggett.

In Toronto, though, Barcia gets back to his winning ways after Roczen grabs the holeshot, only to have Barcia shove his way by for the lead immediately. Barcia takes the win over Roczen and Blake Wharton as the series heads to Houston with the GEICO Honda rider sitting pretty on a 28-point lead.



Ken Roczen nets a couple of second places this month but he's got no answer for Barcia



Darryn Durham's third in the Lites East standings

SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS

1	Ryan Villopoto	271
2	Ryan Dungey	192
3	James Stewart	177
4	Davi Millsaps	169
5	Kevin Windham	166
6	Justin Brayton	165
7	Jake Weimer	150
8	Brett Metcalfe	145
9	Mike Alessi	136
10	Chad Reed	128

LITES EAST

1	Justin Barcia	145
2	Blake Wharton	117
3	Darryn Durham	114
4	Ken Roczen	102
5	Jake Canada	90
6	Blake Baggett	86
7	Justin Bogle	74
8	Malcolm Stewart	50
9	Alex Martin	50
10	Matt Lemoine	46

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Chad Reed's virtually a senior citizen but he's still got what it takes to win at the highest level

OLDER AND WISER!

IN A SPORT THAT'S TRADITIONALLY A YOUNG MAN'S GAME HOW COME SO MANY OF THE RIDERS ARE – RELATIVELY SPEAKING – GETTING A BIT LONG IN THE TOOTH?

Words and photo by **Steve Cox**

In some popular sports such as cycling, many times athletes don't really start to hit their peak until they're in their 30s. Of course, motocross racers do a lot of cycling themselves but they rarely make it into their 30s as professional racers.

But in cycling it's probably pretty rare that a top-tier racer has broken as many bones and dislocated as many joints by 40 as a typical motocross racer has by the time they even make it to the pros, much less make it to their 30s.

You can't peak as a physical specimen when your body is so beat up that you have to start getting really creative in how you train so as to avoid aggravating your numerous past injuries. So in this regard perhaps it's kind of a surprise that the biggest challengers to the two Ryans – Villopoto and Dungey – in the 450cc class are old dudes.

Chad Reed, who was on the gas when he had his big crash and injury earlier this season, is now 30 years old. Kevin Windham landed his second podium of the season at the last round in Toronto and he's 34. Justin Brayton, who has been a fixture near the front this year, is 28. And add to this that outdoors Chad Reed's TwoTwo Motorsports team is hiring Ben Townley to take on the AMA Nationals again and Townley is going to be 28 this summer as well. Andrew Short will be 30 at the end of this year. Brett Metcalfe is 28. The list goes on and on…

So why is this?

Well, most of these guys – unlike guys like James Stewart – have been relatively injury-free in their careers. They're still pretty beat up but, relatively speaking, they've been pretty good. But I think the biggest reason that many of these older gentlemen have taken on the challenger role to the Ryans is because of experience. And I'm not talking about racing experience, although that's obviously a big help. I'm talking about life experience.

Most of these racers have been doing it since they were five. Kevin Windham talks about starting on dirt bikes when he was three and James Stewart is similar in this respect. After racing for fun for most of their young lives it gets serious in their teens when they start to see the potential of a future racing career begin to come to fruition. In the USA these guys start getting paid salaries just after they hit puberty.

When they turn pro people seem to forget about the decade they've already put in as full-time racers. A few years into their pro careers a lot of these guys are just burnt out. They have all of the pressure of fame and expectations – and money – and simply don't know what to do about it. The thing they always just wanted to do for fun can quickly stop being fun.

As detailed a little bit in the Kevin Windham interview in this magazine even he ran into this wall. But now, 10 years later, at 34 years of age Windham is still out there putting it to the young guys. Why? Because he wants to be. At this point he has enough money that he doesn't need to race anymore. He races because he's been around, he's seen what the world has to offer and he has made a conscious decision that he wants to keep racing for as long as he's competitive and as long as it's fun.

And I think the same can be said for a lot of the guys in the list above, especially Chad Reed and Ben Townley. Reed, more than Townley, has all the money he could ever need. He doesn't need to race for the money. Townley is in a similar boat. Both of these guys have spent enough time out of racing or simply growing while still racing that they have the valuable perspective on life that young guys simply lack. For every Ryan Villopoto or Ryan Dungey, there are 10 Josh Hills or Austin Stroupes.

But for those lucky enough to make it through the early parts of their careers and transition into true 'veteran' status, the later years seem to be the most rewarding because unlike their brash, young, fast competition, the veterans know why it's important to enjoy racing while you're doing it – because they can see life after racing from where they're sitting.

And the young guys can't...



TOP DOGS!

AFTER WINNING TWO OUT OF THREE MAJOR ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES IN 2011 HUSQVARNA RAISED THEIR OWN PERSONAL BAR – NOW THEY'RE FACED WITH THE CHALLENGE OF A REPEAT PERFORMANCE IN 2012...

Words and photos by **Future 7 Media/Lynn & Edmunds**

A passion for off-road racing has played a huge part in Husqvarna's world championship successes with 49 of their 82 world titles since their foundation back in 1903 coming in the hardcore world of enduro.

But as everyone knows Italian passion is now channelled by structured German efficiency and three enduro world championships in the last two seasons are a testament to the triumph of this pretty unusual union. At the launch of their 2012 CH Racing Husqvarna by Monster Energy EWC team at the company's headquarters in Milan it's clear to see that Husqvarna are not done with winning just yet.

Unveiling a six-rider line-up for their assault on both the Enduro 1 and Enduro 2 classes in 2012, Husqvarna are determined to retain both the titles they worked so hard to secure last year. Clinching the two crowns marked a perfect end to their 2011 season. But that was then and this is now. With momentum on their side but facing increasingly tough competition, Husqvarna can't afford to sit back and rest on their laurels.

"Last season was the realisation of four years of hard work coming together," confirms Fabrizio Azzalin, the man in charge of Husqvarna's CH Racing team for the past 22 years. "In 2008 we set out a plan to help us to return to the level of success we once had between 1999 and 2003. From 2003 until 2008 Husqvarna were unstable and to a certain degree the future was unsure but we've turned a corner since then and moved on. Our goal was to deliver a world championship within those four years and with both Antoine [Meo] and Juha [Salminen] we achieved three. Right now I feel we are entering a new chapter for the team with new objectives to achieve."

This chapter is one Fabrizio hopes will help secure the team long-term success. Although it appears on paper that they've simply just expanded their efforts to a six-man team for 2012, Fabrizio insists that they've done much more than that. He's developed what he likes to call a pyramid structure with each rider contributing his or her own important role within the team in the hope of ensuring overall success.

"For me I see the team now built like a pyramid," he suggests. "At the top we have Juha. He is our champion and the rider we place the most expectations on. We want him to win. Supporting Juha is both Matti [Seistola] and Alex [Salvini]. We believe that they can win and fight for a top result. We want to see them challenge for victory and become more complete riders. Doing this will mould them into champions.

"Below them we have the riders that will become the next generation of top enduro riders," continues Fabrizio. "Lorenzo [Santolino], Romain [Dumontier] and our Joker, our wildcard, Ricky [Dietrich]. These guys are fast and all with proven speed and past success but to be a world champion will take more than just speed. To reach the next level will take a big step and our goal is to help them to do that. We want them to learn, develop and grow into Husqvarna's champions of tomorrow. We hope that they can benefit from the experience and knowledge that somebody like Juha can offer."

It's a simple theory that in time should work. Sort of like an army really. Juha will lead them into battle, flanked by his wingmen and supported by his troops. But you don't need to dig any deeper to see that Husqvarna only have their eyes on two prizes for 2012 – their six-man team is only divided between E1 and E2 classes.

"We don't have a bike that's competitive enough for the Enduro 3 class," explains Fabrizio. "The two-strokes are old and a little out-dated for world championship racing. We've had great success with them in the past and they're great bikes for most riders but time has moved on since we won with them in the EWC. We hope to return to Enduro 3 in the near future when we have a bike that we feel is competitive enough. That bike is coming, it's just not ready yet.

>>





Fabrizio has run the CH Racing team for 22 years

Husqvarna are pinning their hopes on Matti Seistola stepping up to take on former factory star Antoine Meo



Juha Salminen starts the season looking for a record ninth EWC title

"Right now we have a package we believe in. Both the TE250 and the TE310 are proven winners, our world titles back that up so it is important to keep putting our best foot forward."

When you've got Salminen to put your best foot forward for you that's about as strong a step as you can take. A rider that needs no introduction, Juha has won just about everything a man can win in enduro. In 2012 he's aiming for his ninth enduro world championship and moving on from the E1 class to E2 – the category seen as the most competitive of the 2012 EWC series.

Switching to Enduro 2, he takes control of the TE310 and focuses on what potentially could become one of the tightest and most fiercely contested championship battles of recent times. Of those capable of winning during 2012, the list is a long one.

KTM offer challenges in the form of both Frenchman Johnny Aubert and Spain's Cristobal Gurrero. The Spaniard is viewed as a rider on the up and Aubert is a rider desperate to make amends after two lacklustre years. Gas Gas have built a four-stroke for Ivan Cervantes and after a couple of dry seasons the Spaniard is also determined to win again. Adding Husaberg hopeful Pela Renet and Juha's own team-mate Salvini into the mix leaves E2 looking more competitive than ever. So how does Juha read the script for 2012?

"Yes, for sure it will be a strong class as there is a wide range of riders but I think every class is tough to win and you must always ride to your maximum in order to be champion," explains the Finn. "Every year people see the new season as a bigger challenge than the last but the riders of the past were just as strong as the riders today. Maybe I'm just the constant in it all.

"I've always taken my career one race at time. If you start planning out different situations before they even happen then that's where you start to fall down. We are only ever as good as our last race and that's why I always try to give it my maximum effort when out on track.

"Moving to Enduro 2 helps to keep things



American Ricky Dietrich is the team's 'Joker'



Matti's relishing the challenge ahead of him



Fabrizio and Antoine celebrate their 2011 world title...

FABRIZIO ON...

ANTOINE MEO

"Truthfully I'm happy for him to move to KTM. We had some great years together but as is the case with many riders they feel the need to change things up and Meo is no different. For sure he will be one of the strongest riders in the championship and one many feel could be the champion but it will be a long season and anything can happen. I have my faith in Matti."

RICKY DIETRICH

"Ricky is my Joker – my wildcard in the team. Sometimes we need to have a little fun, a little gamble and mix things up. The time was right to do this with Ricky. He's proven he has the speed in the past, he's very committed to being here but it will take time for him to learn enduro. It doesn't happen overnight but like I said he's my Joker – expect some surprise results from him."

SOUTH AMERICA

"We must go to Chile and Argentina, it will be good for the championship. Okay, it will be financially tough but we know that. To make it into a true world championship this is the right thing to do. But I hope the FIM can see how difficult and expensive it is for us to race there and try to help our situation."

TEAM SPIRIT

"Our strength is the people in the team. This is where our true strengths lie. We know each so well that we've become like a second family and share a passion for racing. It's important to have this feeling within the team. It makes it fun and keeps working enjoyable otherwise I couldn't do this job week-in, week-out."

KTM

"Their main job is to win, they focus solely on winning and will want to beat us. Of course we want to win too but we must also help to develop a bike we can sell. Right now I feel we are continuing to grow and winning in 2011 has shown that. Hopefully we can beat them again this year."







...but the Frenchman will race for KTM in 2012





Go Ricky!

fresh and brings new motivation. I could have stayed where I was but Husqvarna asked me to ride the TE310 and I was happy to do so."

The only 2011 champion competing in E2, he could be viewed as under-powered against 350F and 450F machinery. Even though Meo powered his way to a convincing E2 world title aboard a TE310 in 2011, surely being short on horses is a thought that's crossed his mind – after all everybody will be ready for Husqvarna this time around?

"I'm confident in what I can do on the bike," replies the straight-talking Finn. "I was pretty happy with my set-up of the TE250 but at times I looked for more power. Riding the TE310 I can see that I've already got that. It feels almost identical to my bike I rode last year but with that extra power I wanted. So far I've only had to make some minor suspension adjustments and not a lot else. I've learned over the years that having the right set-up is one of the most important things to have on the bike so I'm confident in what I can achieve this year."

With Juha stepping up to Enduro 2 then common sense suggests that Seistola – Juha's right-hand man in 2011 – will remain as Husqvarna's leading E1 rider. The former motocross star has been on the up for the last couple of seasons. Fourth in 2010, he improved to third during 2011 while picking up victories in Italy, Turkey and Romania.

This year will prove his most challenging yet. Previously overshadowed by his team-mates, Matti knows that in 2012 it's his time to step it up and move into the limelight. "I want to better my position," confirms Matti. "I'm looking towards the title and ideally I want to swap my number three for a one. Last year was great – I improved and picked up some wins along the way – but it's time to aim higher and achieve new goals. It won't be easy. It should be a good fight this year but it's one that needs to be taken one battle at a time.

"Watching and working with Juha has taught me a lot. He's shown that consistency is always the key to success. Last year I had one DNF and it cost me second place in the championship. Sometimes I was too eager to try and win the race in the first test. I would crash and then have to play catch up. I'm trying to be more calculated and controlled in how I race and hope that strategy will help me to make a strong start in Chile."

With the start of the 2012 EWC season now upon us Husqvarna appear upbeat and confident in their approach to the new series and the challenges that lie ahead. But as a complete team, what's the strategy for the new campaign? Just how is Fabrizio planning on rolling the dice in South America?

"Full gas," is his honest answer. "We are ready for the new season but obviously this is racing and how it pans out remains to be seen. For sure KTM are very focused to win again, they will be strong. They have many strong riders – even one of our own – but I know there will be many others that will also come to light in South America. I think that's what makes it that little bit more exciting for us. It is a totally new place to race for everybody. If we can finish the season in October with at least one title then I feel we will have delivered a lot."

SUBSC

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GREEN DAY!

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR TOMMY SEARLE HOOKS UP WITH THREE WINNING KAWASAKI RIDERS CLUB MEMBERS TO GIVE THEM A DAY IN THE DIRT THAT THEY'LL NEVER FORGET...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

Of all the manufacturers currently making off-road race bikes it's Kawasaki who seem to go the extra mile to service the needs of their customers – originally through their ground-breaking Team Green programme and more recently with the Kawasaki Riders Club. And although the sceptics among you might question the true value of this particular loyalty scheme in my mind the KRC offers pretty good value right from the off.

For a joining fee just short of £30 a Kawasaki Riders Club member gets a Kawasaki body warmer worth that amount as well as 10 per cent discount on all other official Kawasaki accessories and clothing. On top of that there's two free issues of Kawasaki's in-house GO magazine included in the deal as well as access to a members only website with online forum, 10 per cent discount off FatCat Motoparc riding fees plus other exclusive money-can't-buy opportunities. While it may not be enough to tempt Honda, Husqvarna, KTM, Suzuki, TM or Yamaha riders into changing their allegiance, for owners of a green machine it's a bit of a no-brainer, right?

Three KRC members who are currently feeling the full force of the club's benefits are Paul Hatch, Olly Wittcomb and Alex Hilton. Not only do the three KX250F-riding 17-year-olds get to enjoy all of the above they were also picked at random from the full list of KRC members to spend a day riding and pre-season training with Tommy Searle – now that's definitely something money can't buy!

With the season fast approaching and Tommy gearing up for the long GP season ahead he's already halfway through his second 'moto' of the day when the three winners rock up to FatCat. By the time they're all kitted up and ready to go Tommy's training is done and he's ready to meet and greet the lucky winners who are all stoked to meet their hero.

"Tommy's a rider I've always really >>



Alex Hilton *Olly Wittcomb* *Paul Hatch*



Tommy's got some wise words about sand riding technique for the lucky winners



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looked up to," says Olly. "He's one of the fastest riders in the world and I'm sure we'll be able to pick up some great tips from him."

And he's not wrong. A short warm-up session kicks things off and as the three students take to the track Tommy watches closely. After 15 minutes or so of hard riding he pulls them off, tells them how it could be done better and then sends 'em out again for more laps so he can further scrutinise their efforts.

"It's nice to see them improving so rapidly," says Tommy. "All three of them are really listening, taking the information in and then applying it straight away. They're all already riding really well anyway because it's actually really tricky out there!"

That's something local lad Alex Hilton already knows quite well. Living locally to FatCat he's a regular visitor and can't wait to show everyone what he's learned when he races here again in just a few weeks time. "I've improved loads already today and Tommy's teaching us more and more all the time," says Alex.



Local lad Alex is a FatCat regular



Paul Hatch makes the long journey from Southampton to train with Tommy at FatCat

"My next race here is only a few weeks away and I know I'm going to be able to surprise a lot of people with my newly found speed. Today has been a once in a lifetime opportunity really and we couldn't have asked for a better rider to teach us some tricks. When I found out that I'd won I was really chuffed – over the moon!"

While Alex has travelled just a few miles to be here that's not the case for Olly who's driven up with his dad from Marshfield or the third of the prize winners – Paul Hatch – who's come even further. "My dad and I drove up from Southampton this morning," says Paul nonchalantly. As a regular competitor on the youth national scene he's no stranger to travelling although he is a >>



Olly travels from one hotbed of British MX – Marshfield – to another for the training day



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MX 500 Racing





MX1

Alfie Smith
Luke Hill

Phil Mercer
Greg Hanson



MX2

J. Nicholls
Arron Jenner
Lewis Tombs
Luke Mellow

Seb Osborne
Alex Davies
Luke Norris

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newcomer to riding Kawasaki race bikes.

"For the past few years I've raced KTMs but I read about the new KX250F in DBR and it had a really good review – the test said the handling was good and the new dual injection system makes it one of the most powerful bikes in the class. My friend already had one so I tried that, I really liked it and we went out and bought one straight away. We also joined the Kawasaki Riders Club and when I found out I'd won this prize I was really excited because Tommy's one of my favourite riders.

"It's been really good and he's given me lots of tips for riding in sand – grip with my knees more, pick good lines and learn to flow with the track – that have all really helped. I feel like I'm definitely riding smoother compared to this morning."

And Tommy agrees. "Paul's riding really well out there. He doesn't look fast but that's deceptive because he's riding so smoothly, he's carrying lots of momentum, using all the right lines and conserving a lot of energy which is so important when you're riding or racing in sand.

"You can actually see a big improvement in all the guys – Alex and Olly too – the difference is huge. Like I said before, they're all great lads, they've all listened to what I've said and then they've put it into practice straight away. For me that makes today really worthwhile – it's been really good fun helping them out."



So has it been worth it for Alex? "I've improved loads already and Tommy's teaching us more and more all the time..."

MAXXIS BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

UP AND RUNNING!

THE 2012 MAXXIS KICKS OFF AT FATCAT WHERE – AS PREDICTED – IT'S THE FOREIGN LEGIONS WHO SMOKE OUR BOYS IN THE SAND...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**

After a couple of years in deepest Devon the opening round of the Maxxis British MX Championship relocates for 2012 and Little Silver's replaced by FatCat Motoparc, a savagely sandy circuit that by the end of the day cuts up super-rough. True, the giant grooves that appear around Little Silver ain't for cissies but they're nothing compared to the horrors that await the Maxxis men in South Yorkshire as they line up for their final motos of the day.

At the start of the day over a leisurely Little Chef brekkie, top pit pundit Sutty predicts that the Brits are in for a thorough smoking in the sand and he's not wrong. Swiss star Arnaud Tonus and his American Monster Energy Bike It Yamaha team-mate Zach Osborne dominate MX2 while up in MX1 it's a Belgian/Baltic blitz for HM Plant KTM UK's Kevin Strijbos ahead of Estonian Gert Krestinov and Latvian Matiss Karro.

Heading into FatCat defending champ Tonus is unbeaten by another 250F pilot in 2012 and he holeshots the first of three 20-minute plus two lap races with Osborne close behind. The American sticks a pass on him around the outside of the left-hander before the huge back straight but brake problems for Zach later in the race allow Tonus back through for the win. Elliott Banks-Browne survives a first lap bike problem to bring the HM Plant KTM UK machine home third.

Race two ends early for Tonus when he crashes out of contention but such is the strength of Steve Dixon's team he still claims a 1-2 with Zach winning from Mel Pocock. Fourth in the opener, Samsung Yamaha's new signing Graeme Irwin goes one better to take third as EBB goes missing near the end of the race with a blown motor.

The final race sees Tonus pull an absolute monster of a holeshot and although Zach takes over at the front for a big chunk of the race it's the defending champ who regroups to lead for the final few laps and take the win. Pocock seals a great day for the boys in black by taking third to end the day second behind Zach and ahead of Irwin who survives a big crash in the final race to claim a career first overall podium finish at this level.

"Arnaud rode great today – he had a crash but obviously he was maybe a little bit better than me today on this terrain," admits Zach. "In the first race I had a bit of brake difficulty but it's good for me to come back and get a good solid result at the beginning of the season and have a bit of fun. We were both riding really well and we smoked everyone else. It's just a shame Arnaud isn't up on the podium with me and Mel today."

While the outcome of MX2 is never really in doubt – pretty much every one of us had a Monster Energy Yamaha rider down for the win – up in MX1 it's a lot harder to call with proven sand riders Strijbos and Marc de Reuver making their series debut, Shaun Simpson returning full-time after a few years on the continent, Karro moving up and the likes of Jason Dougan, Stephen Sword, Martin Barr and Kristian Whatley all on new teams.

And it's Strijbos who comes out >>

Zach Osborne takes the overall win in MX2 after his team-mate Arnaud Tonus crashes out of the second race





SHAUN **SIMPSON**

"I've ridden rougher tracks with riding the GPs but the sun was the worst thing in the last race – you couldn't actually see the bumps and I had an extra six inches on my peak. So it was pretty tough. I got the best jump I had all day and de Reuver took my front wheel in the first corner and I went down and then the clutch was jammed in loads of stuff and two other guys were on top of me. I wasted about 30 seconds getting going. I fought hard and came back but it wasn't enough to get on the podium. There's still improvements to be made on the bike suspension wise but that's something we can do in the next couple of weeks."

ELLIOTT **BANKS-BROWNE**

"Not a great day to start the season off. First race I got a good start and my bike just stopped on the first lap – I've no idea why – but I fired it up again and came back from ninth to third. The second one I got a bad start, felt good coming through and was closing on second when the bike blew up. The last race I had to go out on a totally different bike which had something wrong with the clutch and I literally just rode around in fourth. Not a good start to the championship but I know my speed's there and I'll be back for Canada Heights. I'd have liked to have got on the box and started the championship off better but now I've got a lot of catching up to do."





Bert powers his way to second overall in MX1

GERT **KRESTINOV**

"I've been training with Ed [Bradley] and it's going really good so I'm happy working with him. I've trained my butt off and got second overall. The first two races were really good for me but in the last race the sun was very low and really dangerous so I let off a bit. But I got fourth place in the race for second overall which is really good for me."

GRAEME **IRWIN**

"Today was good although to be honest I'm lucky to be on the podium with how I rode that last race. It was shocking. But I'm pumped. It's great to be back in MX2 again – it's where I should have been last year."



Martin Barr brings the LPE Kawasaki home fifth in MX1





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HARRY **EVERTS**

"I'm here with Kevin Strijbos. Kevin was good in the first race but he could be better. He was not relaxed. The British championship is good. Good races and good organisation always."

Kevin Strijbos runs 1-1-1 in his Maxxis debut to take a commanding win





Defending MX2 champ Arnaud Tonus crashes out of race two



Swordy keeps plugging away all day



NEV BRADSHAW

"That's probably the roughest track I've ever ridden in my life. I came from 25th in that last one – I messed up the start and Pocock hit me and I got back to sixth at the end. I didn't feel good on the bike all day and we've been kinda chasing our tails with our suspension set-up. The positives are I've got fourth overall and finished three motos."



SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

1	Kevin Strijbos **HM Plant KTM UK**	75
2	Gert Krestinov **Route 77 MVR-D Honda**	58
3	Matiss Karro **STR KTM**	57
4	Shaun Simpson **Monster Energy Bike It Yamaha**	56
5	Martin Barr **LPE Kawasaki**	50
6	Jason Dougan **Route 77 MVR-D Honda**	45
7	Stephen Sword **TYCO Suzuki by TAS**	43
8	Jamie Law **D3 KTM**	35
9	Dorren Coutts **PAR Honda**	32
10	Nathan Parker **STR KTM**	32

MX2

1	Zach Osborne **Monster Energy Bike It Yamaha**	69
2	Mel Pocock **Monster Energy Bike It Yamaha**	58
3	Graeme Irwin **Samsung Yamaha**	51
4	Arnaud Tonus **Monster Energy Bike It Yamaha**	50
5	Neville Bradshaw **Evotech Stevens Honda**	48
6	Steve Lenoir **Samsung Yamaha**	41
7	Jordan Booker **Buildbase Honda**	40
8	Elliott Banks-Browne **HM Plant KTM UK**	38
9	Stuart Edmonds **TYCO Suzuki by TAS**	36
10	Bryan MacKenzie **Moto-One Rockstar KTM**	29

VETERANS

1	Philip Mercer **KTM**	50
2	Greg Hanson **GT Kawasaki**	44
3	Gary Hoptrough **KTM**	36
4	Terry House **Poole Yamaha**	35
5	Paul Coward **Kawasaki**	22



Marc de Reuver is disappointed to miss out on a top 10 finish

MARC DE REUVER

"There were maybe a little bit too high expectations today. You know, Marc de Reuver – the sand man. And I didn't ride enough yet and I wanted to do better. But like I said before there are good riders here. But I will get there I think. My goal is to be 100 per cent fit in June or July. It's rough out there. I didn't expect it to be so rough. I like the track and the bike was good, everything was good. It was just me."



MEL POCOCK

"It's been an amazing day but that last race was so hard – I don't think there will be a tougher track on the circuit this year. I rode real strong out there but made one silly mistake in the first race when I mistook Elliott for a back-marker. The bike's amazing – Steve Dixon's made me a super-fast bike – and I'm so happy. I've put in so much hard work over the winter and it's kinda paid off straight away."

swinging, dominating all three races despite suffering from arm-pump in the opening couple of motos. Such is his dominance, the Belgian leads every lap of every race to open up his Maxxis account with a maximum 75-point haul.

"Sure it's been very good," grins Kevin. "I'm feeling very good with my bike and also with my HM Plant KTM UK team. I got the Superpole and from that moment I knew I was riding pretty good and first race holeshot, second race holeshot and almost third race holeshot. Once I was in the lead I could do my own race.

"The first two races I had some problem with arm-pump but the last race was much better so I'm really happy with that."

Woody, making his Maxxis debut on the Monster Energy Bike It Yamaha, comes home second in the opener and with a fourth second time out is looking good for a podium finish. But a first turn coming together with De Reuver in the final race leaves him with a lot to do and despite fighting back to fifth he misses the box by a point.

It's Karro who nips in ahead of Simpson. After problems with the Steve Turner Racing 350 KTM in the opener the Latvian blasts back with two seconds and almost overhauls Krestinov who posts a career-best second overall with a 3-3-4 card.

"I struggled in the first race and had a little problem with the bike so I had to go in the pitlane and lost so many places," says Matiss. "I could've been easily second all three races like I was in the last two. The bike was running really good and I'm happy and I have to say a big thank you to STR KTM and all my Latvian fans who are here."

FatCat also marks the opener in the three-round Vets championship. The old-timers only face two motos but it's still a pretty evil ask to expect the over 40s to race a pair of 20-minute motos around probably the toughest track on the 2012 calendar. Phil Mercer goes 1-1 to win from Greg Hanson's 2-2 with Gary Hoptrough third by virtue of his 4-4.

"I'm over the moon to be honest with you," reckons Greg. "All I could ask for from today was two seconds really. Phil was strong and I went with him in the first one but I just think to run vets around here, a track like this, is evil. I'm not getting any younger and was just surviving in the second race."



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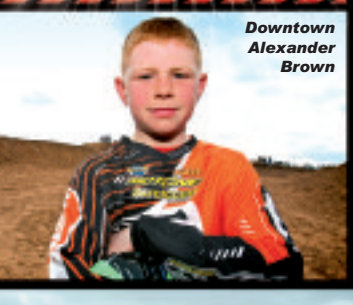
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WPR OK!

WORLD PERFORMANCE RACING – THE NEW TEAM WITH BIG IDEAS

MICKY ECCLES




Downtown Alexander Brown

Todd Kellett's going to be tearing it up for Twisted 7


Sizzling 65cc action


Alex Meadows will be out to bag a load of Rookies points



ELITE ACTION!

EYC SERIES IS ALL SET TO SIZZLE...

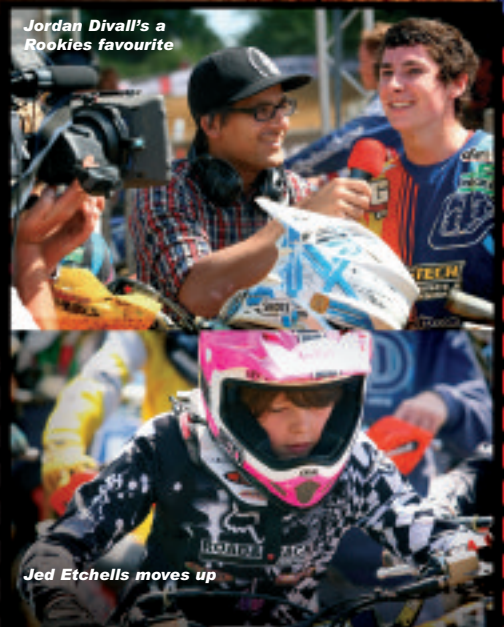
On the weekend of April 28/29, Landrake in Cornwall will be the first stopping off point for the 2012 Elite Youth Cup. For the majority of schoolie racers and parents alike the MCF series has become Britain's premier competition and this year with only a handful of top names unable to make the startline – predominantly through over-subscription – the eventual champions crowned at Culham in September will be fully deserving of the accolade of being Britain's best!

Over the winter months the Powerband Racing duo of Tom Grimshaw and Christopher Mills have caught the eye, emerging as firm favourites to front up the 65s. Both boys are KTM-shod and with Gary Ashley making a return to the Austrian brand and also getting Powerband help the scene is set for a terrifically well-matched fight.

Having said that there could also be a hefty challenge coming from north of the border in the shape of Scott Russell. His talent was good enough to give 2011 champ Alexander Brown a few worries in ACU competition last term and any repeat of that form will surely see him somewhere on the lovely Red Bull box. Elsewhere in the section Jack Wankling, James Hanscombe, Rossi Beard and Luke Woodhouse will also be fancying their chances of sharing the podium limelight.

The 85cc SW challenge is one of the most interesting this year – mainly due to the division's openness. There are no clear-cut show-stealers here so consequently expect the section to throw up a real variety of overall winners. Taylor Hammal finished fifth in the 2011 smallie standings and with his silky-smooth consistent style he is virtually guaranteed to feature far more prominently in 2012.

Following their tumultuous Junior tussle in 2010, Keenan Hird (Moto One/Craigs KTM) and Albie Wilkie (Evo-Tech Honda) together with


Jordan Divall's a Rookies favourite

Jed Etchells moves up

Hammal make up a talented trio who know each other only too well. Joined together again as they were two years ago with Drew Warren (Danger UK), Tom Hume and James McFayden, it's a tasty mix – and the reunion party should be a real hum-dinger!

Digging down further there is also a shout for Bradley Malin (Vampires Rock), Dexter Douglas (Sandiford Off Road) and George Grigg Pettitt (Powerband Racing). And finally never rule out the upgrades with Alexander Brown (Moto One KTM UK), Jed Etchells (Hardcore Racing), Harry Kimber (Twisted 7) and Dylan Woodcock all itching to prove a point.

Conrad Mewse has delivered truly stunning performances at the first four rounds of the Dutch ONK series and he starts as the obvious top pick for the 85cc BW crown. All things being equal Conrad looks nigh-on unbeatable – but if he is to be taken down Josh Gilbert (Buildbase Albion Honda), Sid Evans (Fox Europe), Jordan Eccles (WPR KTM), Todd Kellet (Twisted 7), Jay Hague, Gradie Featherstone and the Vampires Rock pairing of Will Keogh and Scooter Webster will have him in their sights.

With talent like that the scrap for the top six places will be a full-on affair and it won't necessarily be limited to the aforementioned pilots so also expect fireworks from Louis Houghton (Danger UK), Jamie Carpenter, Will Jeonney, Sam Brathwaite, Jack Seaborne, Alfie Bowtell and Gregg Hyett.

With the MCF having an extended upper age limit for Rookies, 18-year-olds Jake Millward (Oakleaf Kawasaki) – the 2011 runner-up – together with Jordan Divall (Evo-Tech Stevens Honda) are able to go again and both start with glowing championship credentials. Lower down the age scale, 15-year-old Somerset giant Tommy Alba impressed all through last season and ultimately finished fifth in the Rookies.

Following a short winter excursion on Suzuki, Alba resumed with Kawasaki at the end of January then wowed the watchers at Le Touquet with a second in class finish. Recently Tommy has won even more fans stomping around in the Phoenix Tools series.

Together Millward and Alba represent a seriously strong Oakleaf combo. Shaun Springer on the Twisted 7 Kawasaki will be another looking to improve on his 2011 performance, as will Kawasaki UK's Damon Brooks and James Harrison on the Lanes Kawasaki machine who along with Suzuki flyer Dan Thornhill will be seriously eyeing up the top six.

As in the smallies this is an evenly matched group with Jack Kelly, Lloyd Pettett, Alec Carefoot, Robbie Muscat, Alex Meadows and Luke Newman also starting with solid chances of picking up points. The very same can be said of the senior class newcomers and they include Matty Callaghan, Jack Gardner, Rob Davidson, Liam Knight, Jordan Godwin and Tom Neal.

For full dates and venues turn to our Red Bull Pro Nationals preview on pages 78-85



Alexander Brown will add some Scottish spice to the SW battle





Title-winning style from Jordan Divall?





Taylor Hammal is going for glory in the SW85s





The BW85cc division is going to be hotly contested

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Micky shows the style he's taking to Europe this season



Jordan's aiming for British BW glory

WPROK!

RAGE CATCHES UP WITH THE FULLY PRO YOUTH TEAM FROM DERBYSHIRE...

At the beginning of this year Rage broke the news on World Performance Racing KTM – a new youth team with big aspirations backed up by KTM UK. We were promised a full interview and recently we caught up with the Chesterfield-based outfit on a shakedown day at Stalker MX near Grantham.

The team now consists of 13-year-old Jordan Eccles going for home-based BW glory while his 15-year-old cousin Michael Eccles fixes on the 125cc Euro trail. Both lads hail from Pontefract in West Yorkshire.

Unveiling a pair of sparkly new machines – a virtual GP spec 125cc smoker for Micky and a fully-sorted 85cc ride for Jordan, experienced Team Manager Richard Boot gives the order to run the new bits in slowly as I get a chance to chat with the main man behind the mission, Neil Haslam.

RAGE: How's the early season prep going and can you outline the WPR plan?
Neil: "It's taken a little longer than we would have liked to pull the full race spec machines together but we are bang on course now. In the meantime the boys have been practising on stock machines with good results coming our way. Jordan won recently up against a good quality field at Finningley and Micky has been making top 10 returns in a very tough over-age ONK class in Holland. Micky has been running 30-minute motos out there and the stamina building will all help. Micky also made podium at the final supercross round on a fairly stock bike and we were chuffed with that performance.

"Together with KTM we have a three-year plan for both boys and it's something I personally have been working on for quite a while now. In year one Micky will run the EMX 125cc series and when in the UK race in the Red Bull two-strokes and Maxxis MXY2. Jordan's first year will be spent concentrating on the EYC and Maxxis 85cc championships. In years two and three both boys will be racing in the European EMX series – Jordan progressing to a 125.

"Both Micky and Jordan are fully supported – no cash has changed hands and the bikes are the real deal, a breath of fresh air for British youth. The bigger picture is for the team to be producing GP class riders for KTM and there is a real possibility that we will expand to include MX1 and MX2 riders as soon as 2013."

RAGE: In our initial conversation just before Christmas you mentioned a hook up with Sheffield Hallam University – how has all that shaped up?
Neil: "This side of things is going really well too – both boys are attending at Hallam twice a month, they are given specialist tuition on fitness, diet and sports psychology. They are closely monitored and the process will be on-going. Added to this both boys have taken on extra fitness training at home. Hallam are now regarded as a world leader in sports education and it's an important part of the overall WPR set-up."

RAGE: Going back to the race machines, how are they different from stockers?
Neil: "We are genuinely sourcing special parts from KTM and the feed will continue and improve with results. The machines are currently set up with full WP suspension and we have a brilliant arrangement with both Pro Circuit and Dunlop. Come race day we will be running on Talon wheels and the all-important powerplants are in-house tuned to a high factory specification. The workshop facilities at Richard's disposal are top notch. The boys' families will not have to do any prep work on race bikes, this is a pro team running pro standards – the boys just turn up and race."

RAGE: Have KTM or yourselves set any initial goals or plans for year one?
Neil: "There is no pressure coming from KTM but personally I think Jordan has a real chance of winning either Red Bull or Maxxis 85s. With Micky at just 15 up against Europe's best and with most guys older it's going to be a toughie but we think top 10 is possible. At home for Micky in Maxxis MXY2 he will be under-powered against the F brigade but on talent well capable of a podium finish."

RAGE: Do you see racing in Europe as key to the team's progression?
Neil: "Absolutely, with all due respect to British series, Europe is the bigger stage and to progress fully at youth level you need to be seen there and doing well."

RAGE: Are there any plans to extend the youth base of the team?
Neil: "I would never rule anything out with the team in a development stage – and there is presently the opportunity for riders to share our knowledge and commitment with various discounted back-up packages available for riders who wish to be associated with us. I'm sure when they see our race machines on track they will be impressed."

RAGE: Good luck with all that guys and you can be sure Rage will be popping back for a mid-term report…



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POWERPLAY!

ONLINE BUSINESS MOVES ON TRACK...

Pic courtesy **Dave Yeomans**

Over the winter months team spirit definitely seems to have been blooming! For example, just before Christmas two new northern-based outfits broke cover – World Performance Racing KTM as detailed in this issue along with Team Vampires Rock.

And then just after Christmas a third team arrived displaying the same professional ethic – this time southern-based but again putting full faith in the Austrian KTM marque.

Powerband Racing officially launched at Washbrook Farm, Cambridgeshire, early in March. The main championship team consists of three guys – George Grigg Pettitt, Tom Grimshaw and Christopher Mills. All three are pretty much the same age – all school year six and 11 years old – but this season will see Tom and Chris going for 65cc honours while George twists the throttle in the Small Wheel ranks.

Having witnessed the 65cc crew in full cry at Wilden Lane a month before the launch Rage can confirm they will be really tough to beat – also watch out for George as he's a real dark horse in the SW ranks. For a detailed insight into Powerband Racing, team co-founder David Grimshaw settled into in the Rage Q and A chair.

RAGE: Hi David, first off where did the Powerband name come from?
David: "Powerband Racing is an online internet business which specialises in all aspects of youth motocross suspension and performance parts which is headed by Chris Mills and Jay Judd. With the help of myself and Andrew Grigg Pettitt it was a natural progression to form a racing team for our sons to go racing with in 2012."

RAGE: Other than your own three boys will there be any more supported riders under the Powerband banner this year?
David: "Absolutely, yes. Not being content with running three top riders at national level, the team will also be providing support packages to several other riders at national and club level events throughout the season – Auto Alfie Rickwood, 65cc Scott Russell and Gary Ashley, 85cc Billy King, Callum Heasman and Connor Wilson.

"The team will also be offering semi-support to several other club riders around the country including a 10 per cent discount for our local club members of EKSSC. We want to be able to give something back to the riders to make it easier to keep racing in these hard times."

RAGE: What is the race schedule for the main three boys?
David: "The team's main focus this season will be Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and British Youth National Championships. The boys will also be venturing across the channel to race some selected Dutch and French nationals where possible."

RAGE: Have you set any championship goals for this first season?
David: "Having fun and enjoying ourselves is the main aim but having said that we are pretty confident our boys will be competitive. Looking forward Powerband Racing will be using this year's experiences to build a platform for the future."

RAGE: Apart from Powerband who else is on board providing help for the first season?
David: "The team has been very lucky in obtaining some very high-profile sponsors from within our industry and also from outside the sport and recently had a very successful team launch at Washbrook Farm."



MEET THE TEAM

CHRISTOPHER MILLS #7

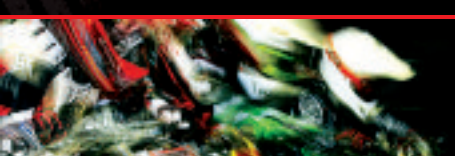
Bike: *Powerband KTM 65cc*
DoB: *18-4-01*
Hometown: *Ashford, Kent*
Hobbies: *Kick boxing, football*
Years racing: *Four*
Achievements: *2009 Auto Cambridge MX Winter and Summer Champion, MX 90 Champion, Coventry MX Winter and Summer Champion, 2010 65cc fourth Cambridge MX, 2011 seventh Red Bull EYC*
Favourite rider: *Chad Reed*

GEORGE GRIGG PETTITT #12

Bike: *Powerband KTM 85cc*
DoB: *15-1-01*
Town: *Hitcham, Suffolk*
Hobbies: *Swimming, rugby, football, BMX*
Years racing: *Four*
Achievements: *2008 Auto Cambridge MX third, Kensworth MX third, 2009 BYMX 20th, 2010 Red Bull EYC 11th, Norfolk and Suffolk MX second, 2011 SW85cc Red Bull EYC 12th overall, Norfolk and Suffolk MX Champion*
Favourite rider: *Jake Nicholls*

TOM GRIMSHAW #61

Bike: *Powerband KTM 65cc*
DoB: *29-3-01*
Hometown: *St Albans, Hertfordshire*
Hobbies: *Swimming, football, squash*
Years racing: *Two*
Achievements: *2010 Kensworth MX 65cc champion, 2011 65cc fifth Red Bull EYC and part of winning team BYMX Team Event (Cambridge MX Club)*
Favourite riders: *Kevin Windham and Elliott Banks-Browne*



GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK



"Is that 50 punce doon there?"

SURE THINGS!

FATCAT SUCKED ASS FOR OUR BORDERS BUDDY BUT THANKS TO A DEAL WITH A WELL-KNOWN DEODORANT MANUFACTURER THE MONTH'S ENDED SMELLING SWEET ASS...

Words by **Bryan MacKenzie** Photo by **Sutty**

It's unbelievable that so much has happened since last month yet I feel, as the old saying goes, 'there's not much to write home about'! That's maybe being a wee bit dramatic and slightly exaggerated but it is how I feel after riding like a complete wanger at the season opener!

So it's all kicked off and I had three busy weekends last month all over the UK. But because the first round of the British championship at FatCat – arguably the biggest race of the year for the domestic championship racer – turned out to be about as successful for me as any of the Home Alone movies after the original, I feel that last month was a massive disappointment. I had two pretty successful weekends to my one nightmare at Fatcat but that's the one I wanted and my below-par performance there ruined March for me.

It must be the most anticipated race of the season for riders and industry alike as you have months and months of preparation and time to think about how you want it to pan out so it comes with a lot of hype and emphasis. But it really couldn't have gone much worse! It first went tits up in December or whenever it was that the calendar was announced and FatCat was down as round one! That sucked right off the bat. I've made it no secret and I'll say it again – I hate the place! I don't know how or why as I love a bit of sand, the track and facilities are top drawer and it's not even that far from home – it has all the right ingredients. But from day one I've taken to it like a gremlin to water.

Regardless, I prepared myself the best I could and just wanted to be in the top five by the time we left. That wasn't the case though and sh*t went south early doors. I had a bit of bother in qualifying which gave me a terrible gate pick for the whole day, followed up with being t-boned by a French-flavoured Honda in turn one of the first race, two crashes in moto two and a crap start and steady ride in moto three. All for 10th overall. Piiiiiiised! That was way under par for what I expected from myself hence the reason I find it hard to write anything positive about it. In fact, I think I've tried to erase it from my memory already – if not I've definitely stored it right in the back of my mind somewhere probably next to fractions and my first intimate interaction!

But as I said it hasn't been all bad. I've probably mentioned before that this is the first time I've ever ridden for a Scottish-based team in my career and so the first time I've ever been committed to racing north of the border. So one of the races I did last month was the first round of the newly-formed Scottish Motocross Nationals at another bottomless sand track at Tain in the Highlands.

It turned out to be a pretty decent weekend and I had a fairly good time up there leaving with the National class championship lead once it was all said and done. The icing on the cake though was the beautiful acoustic sounds and vocals of the Biffy Clyro tribute band that some of the MotoOne mechanics formed on Saturday night when they kicked off their first concert in the very hotel I was staying in! The place is a little ropey and more like an old b&b with a bar and restaurant so the soundproofing isn't really up to much – if you tried hard enough you could probably hear someone in the room next door interfering with them self, let alone a rock concert in the bar.

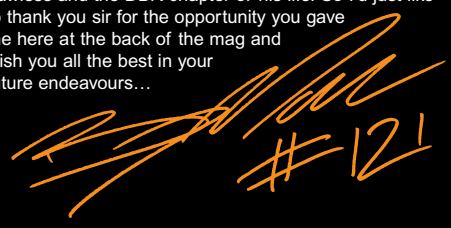
I didn't dare get up though as if I showed face down there I'd never have been allowed to leave until I had done a couple of duets with the boys and air guitared like Slash. The old guy who owned the place was even in on it after sharing one too many drams with 'Biffy'. In the morning a couple of iPhones were getting passed about with pictures of the night's shenanigans on them and it was like something from the end credits of The Hangover.

Another pretty cool deal floated my way too this month when I got a gig with the peeps at Sure for Men, the deodorant. I took a call from a random number a couple of weeks ago and you know when you don't recognise a number and just expect it to be some sales sh*te so right from the off you're on the defensive and trying to express your annoyance with absolute no interest in your voice? Well that was me!

The lady on the other end opened the call with a load of spiel about who she was and who she worked for etc and asked if I had a minute to talk. Because I was driving at the time and have lately taken loads of calls about being miss-sold PPI or wanting to help me get compensation for a crash I've never had I was a bit blunt and kinda rude on the phone. I answered with "that depends on what you want to talk about" before she named dropped a respected compadre of mine and I realised that this sh*t was legit! Ooops!

So I quickly changed my tune, dressed up my accent and hit out with my best phone voice. Turns out she wanted to know if I'd be interested in filming a viral video with Freddie Flintoff for their new can of Sure for Men which has just been released. Pretty cool I thought so I took her up on it. We shoot it down in London Town the day after Canada Heights so I'll be sure to let you know how it goes – and probably how ropey Flintoff is on a mud-cycle!

Anyway, I believe that the end is nigh for our man Lawless and the DBR chapter of his life. So I'd just like to thank you sir for the opportunity you gave me here at the back of the mag and wish you all the best in your future endeavours…



DOCTOR WHO!

HOW THE OPENING ROUND OF THE AUSSIE NATS WOULD HAVE PANNED OUT IF BILLY RACED A FULL-FACTORY TARDIS...

Words by **Billy MacKenzie** Photo by **Matty Muir**

It's only three days until round one of the MX Nationals in Australia but the DBR deadline has come earlier than expected and I'm forced to write this column before the action has started. I'm pretty tired today from training but I'll try my best...

So I beam down and arrive at a sunny Conondale which is a small town up on the sunshine coast of Queensland. The track is looking really nice and well prepped. It's an undulating hardpack track set within green rolling hills. Everyone is happy and excited to get racing, the team set-ups are looking fancy and all the new bikes are on display. There are lots of campers and tents everywhere, like the good old days at Foxhill for the British GP. It's a perfect weekend to go racing.

Practice starts and I'm getting the track dialled in. The bike is brand new so it takes a while to get used to compared to my old practice steed. After a few laps though she starts to feel nice, the power is strong and the fresh tyres are hooking up lovely. The track has a really cool flow with lots of big floaty jumps in and out of the rolling valleys. I notice this one photographer on the sickest jump on the track and do a little showing off as I spin the laps! I'm feeling good and the clock is counting down until timed practice starts so I make sure I do one last lap to find my lines before I do my first flying lap.

The track is over two minutes long and full of jumps so it's gonna be a fun race. The top guys all go at it for pole position and in the end I get it by 0.4 secs (this is my story of the future after all)…

The first race gets going and I go down at the first corner so I jump in my time capsule and set it to the start of the race again. This time I'm third by the end of the first lap, pushing hard to catch Marmont and Brad. Brad makes a huge mistake and almost backflips off the finish line – he's just about to crash hard but I use the time capsule to take him back the corner before and save him. Rule one of being a time capsuleer is you have to only use it to do good. So we hit the finishline jump in style this time, he even does a look back as if to say 'did that just happen?' (don't ever tell him if you see him readers).

We're all battling it out pretty hard at the front and I'm kinda just sitting back watching the leading two go at it when I start thinking about the AMA Supercross for some reason – I wanna know who wins the final race so I set the time capsule for the last AMA SX in Vegas!

I'm in the VIP at Monster Energy in Vegas for the last round. Dungey is back and it looks like he is the only one to be able to try keep up with Villopoto. The Main Event gets under way and Villopoto smokes it – he'd already won the championship three rounds before – so I get bored and head to the casino! I'm at the blackjack table with Johnny Depp to my left and a pole dancing midget to my right and I'm up $96,000 so I take my winnings and set the capsule back to the Australian MX National.

I'm back running a comfortable third and watching the boys go at it. I'm biding my time and looking for lines to make an attack. I'm feeling a bit dizzy from watching the roulette wheel go round and the money in my Smuggling Duds boxers is weighing me down. I decide I'd better make my move with three laps to go. I move up on Brad, he hits Marmont in a tight left-hander and I slip through into the lead. Race one win for MacKenzie!

Race two and Coppins pulls the holeshot. I'm in second and going at it. The race is five laps in and all of a sudden I get black flagged? I see the black flag for three laps until I realise it is being aimed at me. I have to pull in thinking I'm just gonna get a stop and start penalty for something I didn't know I'd done. As I stop they tell me I'm disqualified for having my cuffs cut off my race jersey! I take the black flag and stick it somewhere the official is uncomfortable with, do a doughnut round him and roost the other officials. I'm really angry but I know I can't use the time capsule for my own benefits so I set off in a charge for the lead.

I'm back in 10th place but I've got the red mist going on. I'm working my way up the field, pulling some crazy moves, scrubbing the jumps and railing the outsides. I make it up to fourth place with a lap to go, all of a sudden the race is red flagged due to the official having some sort of medical problem in the middle of the track! Before a decision is made to make the race count I quickly use the time capsule to go back in time and save the official's life and using the time capsule for the greater good earns some good karma and we start the second race like nothing had happened. I even put on a fresh full-sleeved shirt and take the win!



Billy flanked by team-mates Jay Marmont and Kade Mosig



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